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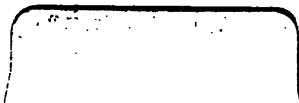
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SOME ACCOUNT  
OF  
SIR ROBERT MANSEL K<sup>T</sup>,

VICE ADMIRAL OF ENGLAND, AND MEMBER  
OF PARLIAMENT FOR THE COUNTY  
OF GLAMORGAN;

AND OF  
ADMIRAL SIR THOMAS BUTTON K<sup>T</sup>,

OF WORLTON, AND OF CARDIFF, IN THE  
COUNTY OF GLAMORGAN.

BY  
GEO. T. CLARK.

DOWLAIS :  
1883.



## SIR ROBERT MANSEL.

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SIR ROBERT MANSEL, Knt., Vice-Admiral of England, Treasurer of the Navy, and Member of Parliament for the county of Glamorgan, is probably the ablest and most distinguished public man whom that county has produced. He was the fourth son of Sir Edward Mansel, of Margam, and Lady Jane Somerset, and displayed much of the mental activity, personal courage, and taste for mechanical pursuits, which shone so conspicuously in the second Marquis of Worcester, his mother's great-nephew, and, towards the latter part of his career, his own contemporary.

Sir Robert followed the profession of the sea, and won early distinction in arms. He served in several expeditions, and commanded in one; and on shore he was an able administrator of naval affairs during the reigns of Elizabeth, James, and Charles. In Parliament, where he sat during the greater part of his mature life, he was listened to as an authority on



navy matters; and though, with his relations paternal and maternal, a zealous royalist, he dared to speak his mind freely, and to oppose the favourite, Buckingham; in his mad career. He passed, not unchallenged, but with proven purity, through a position of great pecuniary temptation; and in an age when official honesty was sufficiently rare, and having had the spending of many thousands of pounds of public money, he lived and died a man of moderate means.

To him also is to be attributed, not, indeed, the original invention, but the first active employment of coal as fuel in the manufacture of glass, and a very considerable development of that useful manufacture. He held under the mischievous system then prevalent, a patent of monopoly of this manufacture, under which he erected glass-works in Broad Street London, at Purbeck, on the Trent, at Milford Haven, and finally at Newcastle on Tyne, where alone the manufacture really flourished, and of which port it has ever since remained a staple. In his own county his name and services have been suffered to fall into complete oblivion, and though his portrait is still preserved in the house of his fathers, neither in his case nor in that of Sir Thomas Button, his celebrated contemporary and kinsman, have the corporations of their native ports of Swansea and Cardiff shown any interest in their fame, or any desire to possess representations of their most, if not their only, distinguished citizens.

Sir Edward Mansel died 5th August, 1585, aged fifty-four, and lies buried at Margam. Lady Jane died 16th October, 1597, and is also there buried. They had eighteen sons and four daughters. Thomas, the eldest, succeeded. Rice was a captain in the army, and was killed in Ireland. Francis founded the line of the Mansels, baronets, of Muddlescombe. Anthony, the fifth son, of Trimsaron, seems, from the State Papers, to have been concerned, in 1631, in concerting measures for the relief of the poor. Philip founded a branch at Henllys, of which was Colonel Edward Mansel in 1685. Of Harry nothing is recorded. Charles, a captain, was killed in Ireland. Christopher and William are unknown. Of the daughters, Elizabeth married Sir Walter Rice of Newton or Dynevor. Cecil married Sir Richard Williams of Llangibby. Mary married Christopher Turberville of Penllyne, sheriff of Glamorgan, 1615; and Ann married Edward Carne of Nash.

Sir Edward was the second possessor of Margam, which had been purchased from the Crown on easy terms by his father, Sir Rice. He sat in Parliament for Glamorgan, and won distinction as a soldier in the great reign of Elizabeth. 21st Sept., 1572, he was knighted, and was active in mustering the forces of the county, of which he was sheriff in 1575. His name appears in the Domestic State Papers of the reign,

chiefly connected with local matters, as in a commission of piracy, rebuilding Cardiff Bridge, and claims of right of wreck upon his shore, about the mouth of the Avan, in which he held his own against the somewhat overbearing claims of the Earl of Pembroke.

Sir Robert seems to have been born about 1573, and probably was sent early to sea. The inducement to enter that profession was, no doubt, the connexion of his family with Lord Howard of Effingham, whose mother, a Gamage of Coyty, was of kin to the Mansels, and who was then Lord High Admiral of England, and, which that office did not always imply, a seaman. His first recorded service was at the siege of Cadiz in 1596, where he served under the Earl of Essex and Lord Howard, and where Sir Walter Raleigh commanded a division of the fleet. This expedition was remarkable for the number of men of rank who served in it as volunteers. There is some doubt whether he commanded the "Acquittance" on this occasion, but however this may be, he was one of those who, with the Earl, forced a way into the town, and one of the sixty officers upon whom Essex conferred the honour of knighthood. Elizabeth, who was sparing in her rewards, censured the Earl's profusion in this respect, but that she approved of the selection of Sir Robert was shewn by her confirmation of it, by herself knighting him in 1596. He was then about 23 years old.

In June, 1597, he was employed under Essex, as captain of the Earl's own ship, in the unfortunate expedition intended to harry the ports and islands of Spain, and in which he commanded, first the "Mary Honora," and afterwards the "Repulse." Among the volunteers who distinguished themselves in this expedition occur the well known South Welsh names of Lawrence Kemys, and Sir Charles and Sir William Morgan. Early in 1599 he was in command of three ships about to be despatched to the coast of Ireland, where Essex was Lord Deputy and Commander in Chief. Here he probably remained, for 29th Aug., 1600, the reason assigned for keeping Sir Robert Leveson in the narrow seas is that "Sir Robert Mansell is but weak."

It was so much the custom in those days to reward services, not by direct payment, but by Crown grants or reversions, that it is possible that Sir Robert was the Robert Mansell, who, 9th July, 1597, had a share in the first fruits of the See of Chichester, on account of which he stood indebted to the Crown.

10th Oct., John Chamberlayn writes to Dudley Carleton that "Sir Robert Mansfeld and Sir John Haydon, two Norfolk knights, have slain each other at tilt with their rapiers. One had six wounds, and the other four." And 15th Oct., "I hear that the Norfolk knights are not dead, though they had double the number of wounds reported." This seems to refer to Sir R. Mansel, who

is on other occasions called Mansfeld or Mansfield, as was his ancestor, Sir Rice; though how he comes to be called a Norfolk Knight is unknown. However, in Nov. 1603, Sir W. Waad writes, "Lord Cecil says he supposes Sir Rob. Mansfeld is in Norfolk." Heydon was about and in trouble; as one of Essex's followers, in Feb. 1601. The duel is mentioned in a private letter from Rowland White to Sir Robert Sydney, 9 Oct., 1600. A doubt also hangs over the name of Sir Robert's antagonist, who has been called Heylron. Heydon, however is a Norfolk name, and curiously enough the will of Sir N. Bacon of Stiffkey, 4 June, 1614, mentions Sir Christopher Heydon, and "my brother Mansell."

Some connexion with Norfolk he certainly had, for he was returned to Parliament for King's Lynn in 1601, when he was employed in guarding the English coast, and in 1603 Sir Wm. Waad, accounting to Cecil for his absence, supposes him to be in Norfolk.

In 1602 Sir Robert printed what is now a rare tract, entitled "A true report of the service done upon certain gallies passing through the narrow seas; written to the Lord High Admirall of England, by Sir Robert Mansel, Knight, Admiral of Her Majesty's forces in that place." On the frontispiece is a large woodcut of a ship of the line, in full sail, at each mast head on a small square flag a plain cross, and on the poop flagstaff a large ensign of the arms of the Lord High Admiral, the

Earl of Nottingham, being Howard, Brotherton, Warren, and Mowbray, with a mullet over all.

Sir Robert puts forth this statement, because false accounts have been published of the proceedings, ignoring Her Majesty's ship and himself.

It seems that on the 23rd of Sept., 1600-1, Sir Robert was in command of the "Hope," with the "Advantage," Capt. Jones, (probably one of the well known family afterwards of Fonmon), and two Dutch consorts, men-of-war, besides two fly-boats. The other ships of his squadron had been despatched on special service, especially the "Advice," Capt. Bredgate, which was in the Downs.

Sir Robert's duty was to intercept certain gallies, expected to be coming from the west, for the ports of Dunkirk, Nieuport, or Sluys. With this view he stood S.E. across the channel towards France, somewhat E. of the Goodwins, and much nearer to the French coast. The "Advantage," was to his starboard or weather side and the other ships beyond her. While thus sailing they sighted six gallies to the N.W., shifted their course to cut them off, and gained upon them. The two fly-boats were nearest to the gallies, and no match for them, but the heavy metal of the "Hope" made the gallies afraid to attack. They went about, used their oars, and ran down the English coast, having the best of it in speed. Their object clearly

was to escape out of sight, and then cross the channel for Dunkirk.

Sir Robert despatched the "Advice" to Calais roads to warn the Dutchmen lying there to look out, and as he continued the chase he fired great guns to call the attention of the "Answer" to what was going forward. As the gallies neared the Downs and came within sight of the "Answer," Sir Robert made for the south end of the Goodwins and there lay to, explaining to his men in a speech from the poop his reason for doing so. This was that if the gallies continued off the English coast they would probably, without his aid, be taken or run ashore; but that if they ran out to sea his presence would be necessary to cut them off. Accordingly the gallies seem to have fallen into the trap, to have left their pursuers behind, and to have been sighted on their course across by Sir Robert, who disabled one, but was prevented from taking her by the necessity for attacking the rest. The result was, that of the six, two were run down or stemmed and sunk, two were wrecked off Nieuport, and two seem to have reached Dunkirk, though so damaged as to be past ordinary repairs.

As the sort of general engagement that ended the affair took place after dark, there was much uncertainty as to how much each ship contributed to the victory, and the Dutchmen, who probably had

the best of it, claimed it; but Sir Robert maintained that really the victory was due to him, since he waylaid the gallies, which would otherwise have made their port, certainly crippled one, and as certainly delayed the rest until the Dutchmen came up with them.

He seems to have shewn a sound perception of the duties of a commander-in-chief, and to have postponed any desire for personal distinction to the general duty of bringing about the destruction of the enemy. His pamphlet is ably written, and gives a very graphic account of the whole transaction. It seems to have been very favourably received, and to have established its author's reputation as an able seaman, as well as a man who could, upon occasion, make good use of his pen. It was probably for this service that he was named Admiral of the Narrow Seas, and Vice-Admiral of the Fleet.

In 1602, he was in communication with Secretary Cecil, among whose papers several of his letters are preserved.

Sir Robert's early promotion was no doubt mainly due to the favour of Lord Essex and Lord Howard, but he now stood upon his own merits alone, and in future his position under the great Queen rested on an independent basis, and was transmitted to her successor, who confirmed him in his post of Vice-



Admiral. In 1603, soon after James' arrival, Sir Jerome Turner and Sir Robert Mansel received orders to escort from Calais and Gravelines the ambassadors of France and Spain coming on a visit of congratulation to the new sovereign. The great Sully, or de Rosny, the French ambassador, ordered the Vice-Admiral of France to hoist the French flag. This was contrary to the claim of England to the sovereignty of the Narrow Seas, and Sir Robert ordered the flag to be struck, under a threat of firing upon the ship. Sully, gave way, but complained to James of the arrogant conduct of his admiral. In this year also, 15th Nov., he had the charge of Sir Walter Raleigh from London, to be tried at Winchester.

In 1603, he sat for the county of Carmarthen, probably by the interest of his kinsmen at Dynevor and Muddlescombe, backed, no doubt, by the popularity due to his naval successes. It appears that he had taken prizes, for 20th Jan., 1604, was issued a commission to the Lord Treasurer and others "to dispose of the goods taken in the late carrack, and of certain pepper taken by Sir R. Mansel."

20th April, 1604, he had a grant of the treasurer-ship of the navy for life, on the surrender of Sir Fulk Greville. 15th May, a warrant dormant was issued in his favour for £11,000 annually, for repairs of

ships in harbour; and a warrant, next day, to him as actual Treasurer, for £2,941 : 7 : 3, for general purposes; and a warrant dormant for a sum unspecified, for the charges of ships appointed to guard the Narrow Seas, the Thames, and the Medway. 18th May he had a warrant for £766 10s. "for charge of the "Tramontana" serving on the coast of Ireland."

In this year, also, he was the leading member of a Royal Commission for reducing the charges of the navy, and the report, a very able one, enters upon the present condition of the navy, with its defects, and sets forth provisions for its repairs, its necessary strength for the protection of the coasts and the commerce of the kingdom, and what should be the cost. Four ships were to be allowed for the Narrow Seas, and two for the Western coast. Much mention is made of Chatham, the new Arsenal. One result of this report was the building of the "Prince Royal," launched in 1610. The Commissioners were but four, all naval officers, and the report was probably in great part the work of Mansel.

The estimate of the cost of the navy, as recommended, is rather above £20,000 per annum, and as much more was required to place the ships and arsenals in a proper condition.

In 1605, the Vice-Admiral accompanied Lord

Howard, now become Earl of Nottingham and Lord High Admiral, to the "Groyne," as Corunna was then called by the English; and thence went with him, by land, to Valladolid, to receive the Spanish King's oath to observe the recent treaty of London. While the embassy was at Corunna, the Spaniards were suspected of purloining the plate sent by their government to do honour to the English visitors. Sir Robert, on the watch, soon afterwards, at a grand entertainment, detected a Spanish guest in the act of putting some of the silver into his bosom. He rose, took the Spaniard to where sat the grandees of his nation, and then and there shook him violently till the plate tumbled out. The same personal boldness was displayed by him at Valladolid, where he pursued a thief of some rank into the house of an alguazil, and by force recovered a jewel stolen from his person.

In 1605-6, he was a combatant in Ben Jonson's masque of *Hymen*. He and Sir Lewis Mansel took the side of "Truth" against "Opinion." Sir Lewis was eldest son of Sir Thomas, and succeeded as baronet in 1626. At this period Sir Robert's name begins frequently to appear in the State Papers. 11th Jan., 1606, he and Sir J. Trevor recommend Capt. Christopher Newport for a reversion of the office of Master, which was granted. In Aug., 1606, he attends the King of Denmark to his own country, in command of the "Vanguard" and another ship.

His boldness, and probably a rough naval temper, provoked not a few enemies. 24th Feb., 1608, he, Sir J. Trevor, and Phineas Pett, were charged with "freighting the ship 'Resistance' from the King's stores, in March 1605, selling the goods for their own gain, and then claiming wages, etc., for their voyage, as though she had gone in the King's service." A commission was engaged seven years in sifting this charge, which completely broke down, and "the proud Welshman," as he was called, passed unchallenged for the future.\* The charge seems scarcely to have been regarded as serious, for he continued to hold office, and the money-warrants were issued to his credit as before. 15th May, 1610, he had a warrant for £8,476 : 9 : 8, to be paid over to certain agents for the Muscovy merchants, "for cordage delivered into the storehouses at Deptford;" also, 24 Nov., he had "£2,500 for finishing the new ship called "The Prince Royal," in addition to the £6,000 formerly advanced; and by another payment, "£2,481 : 3 : 11 for cables and cordage." In the autumn of this year preparations were making for the launch of Pett's great ship at Deptford. In this Sir Robert took a

\* A charge connected with this was brought against Pett as master shipwright, and heard by James himself, 8th May, 1609, the Earl of Nottingham, High Admiral, being in attendance. Sir Robert, Pett, Capt. Button, and others were attacked. "The good old lady, Mrs. Mansel, was present with Mrs. Button."

very active interest. 19th Sept. we find him dining with Pett at his lodging, and on the 23rd Sir Robert entertains the Admiral in his own lodging at Deptford. The launch failed on the 24th, but was successful early on the following morning; Prince Henry being on board. "The Prince Royal" is said to have been "in all respects the greatest and grandliest ship that ever was builded in England."

In April, 1611, Prince Henry, attended by Sir Robert Mansel, Sir Oliver Cromwell ("The Golden Knight"), and others, inspected the ships at Chatham.

26th July, 1612, Sir Robert appears as a member of the Muscovy and East India Company for discovering the North-West Passage, then incorporated under the auspices of Prince Henry. In April, 1610, they had sent out Hendrick Hudson. With Sir Robert occur the names of William Earl of Pembroke and two Glamorganshire commoners, Sir Edward Lewis of Van, and Capt. Thomas Button. They were to enjoy for ever the exclusive trade into the North-West Passage, defined as extending from the headland of Greenland, called "Cape Desolation," and the cape or headland of America, called "Labrador." They sent out Capt. William Button, a Glamorganshire man, in 1612, to "perfect the discovery."

11th Feb., 1613, Sir Robert appears as commander of the mock fights on the Thames, arranged between

him and the High Admiral, and representing the town and ports of Algiers, in honour of the approaching marriage of the Princess Elizabeth to the Palatine. "Sir R. Mansel," says Pett, possibly with a touch of satire, "is chief commander, who takes great pains, and, no doubt, will do his best to show his ability." This office, however, did not prevent him from being in opposition to the court, and on the 10th of June he was committed to the Marshalsea for animating the Lord Admiral against a commission to reform abuses in the navy. With him was also committed Whitelock, for declaring the commission illegal, and speaking against the authority of the Marshalsea Court. These abuses, though of long growth, had much increased under the mal-administration of Sir Robert's friend and kinsman Lord Nottingham, and his position was no doubt one of great embarrassment. It appears, although he supported his friend, he strongly advised him to retire, and so the matter ended, Whitelock was employed by Sir Robert as counsel. 12th June, the matter came before the Council, when the offenders submitted themselves in writing, and next day were admonished, liberated, and restored to favour. Sir Robert, however, was above a fortnight in the Marshalsea.

In 1614, he again sat for Carmarthenshire; and 1st June, 1615, was a grant to Philip Earl of Mont-

gomery, Sir Thomas Howard, Sir Robert Mansel, Sir Edward Zouch and others, of all glasses forfeited for being imported contrary to the recent proclamation.

In Nov., 1616, he was about to marry Mrs. Elizabeth Roper, the Queen's woman, "or antient, or maid of honour;" and the King gave him £10,000, and the Queen the wedding feast at Denmark House, and a fair cupboard of plate. They had also other good and rich presents from friends. She seems to have been a member of the Teynham family, probably a daughter or sister of the then lord. The marriage took place 15th March, 1617. The attachment was possibly an old one, as she is spoken of as his "old mistress." Later in the year he made an application concerning the timber and plant at Woolwich. In this year Buckingham succeeded to the head of the Navy, and Sir Robert was appointed Vice-Admiral of England for life. One of Lord Nottingham's last acts, no doubt the act of Sir Robert in his name, was the appointment of the famous commission for establishing the efficiency of the navy, which sat for so many years, and was finally reconstituted in 1628—a commission the proceedings of which are very voluminous, and afford a curious and very complete account of the government of the navy at that time.

There is a curious letter in the Fortescue Papers

(Camden Soc., p. 31), dated 14th Nov., 1617, from Sir Thomas Lake to the Earl of Buckingham: "In the navy we concluded yesterday with Sir Robert Mansell upon his offer that, if he might have ten thousand pound presently, His Majestie should save six hundred poundes a monthe for ever, which is about seven thousand poundes by yeare, and the mystery was not great, though it have been long in suspence, for it was no more but where H. M. keepeth now continewally at seas seven ships and pynaces, he wold keep but fowre, and discharge the rest, which this ten thousand pound must full pay for their service past; but we have ordered he shall have the money." This, however, has nothing to do with the royal marriage gift. Here the £10,000 were for service purposes only, to pay off the crews no longer needed.

In 1618, Sir Richard Sutton and Francis Gofton "have received the accounts of Sir R. Mansel for the last five years, and will make them up as soon as possible." Soon after was "an order for the searching the books for the sums issued to Sir R. Mansel as treasurer of the navy, in the Easter terms of 1617, 1618." This audit was to enable Sir Robert to sell his office of Treasurer, which he did, in May following, to Sir William Russell, a Muscovy merchant. 14th May he had a grant of the Lieutenantancy of the Admiralty of England, void by the death of Sir R. Levison; and he



took a legal opinion, that he could not be deprived save for misdemeanour in the execution of the office. 31st July, certain sums due are paid to him, "notwithstanding his surrender." The sums seem to have been the balance of £28,121, formerly assigned for building the "Elizabeth," "Triumph," "Rainbow," and "Antelope." 29th Sept. an account is rendered of all sums paid to Sir Robert for ships in harbour from Oct., 1611, to 9th Feb., 1617-18; also for ships in the Narrow Seas, from 30th April, 1612, to Sept., 1618; also for the Narrow Seas, cordage, etc., and transporting the Lady Elizabeth and the Bishop of Orkney, fetching in pirates, etc.; also from 5th May, 1617, to 9th Sept., 1618, for moneys paid him.

4th Nov., the commissioners of the navy request that the £900 per month paid for cordage, and the arrears of Sir R. Mansel's last account, may be applied to pay discharged workmen, and for other named purposes. 21st November, they complain that Sir Robert, instead of the promised ledger and vouchers, has merely sent in an uncertified abstract of his payments, 1613-1818, and no account of his receipts.

10th Dec., he is deep in glass-making. The State Papers contain various entries on this subject during the reign of Elizabeth. In 1567 it was admitted that Englishmen did not make good glass. That and pottery were then manufactured by

Cornelius de Lannoy. Two years later Briet and Carré were recommended to Cecil by the Vidame of Chartres, as seeking permission to erect glass-works in London similar to those at Venice. They probably had permission, for in 1568 Becque and Quarre apply for wood for charcoal from Windsor Park, and in 1574 mention is made of the Frenchmen in England who make glass.

In 1592 Sir Jerome Bowes had a license to make drinking-glasses for twelve years, on the expiration of a term of twenty-one years held by James Varselyne, at a rent of one hundred marks. Bowes was alive and active in 1613, and his company was opposed by a rival company, also with a patent, held by Sir Edward Zouch. Bowes was offered, and refused, £1,000 per annum if he would retire. Lord Coke advised the granting a new patent to Zouch, and the reserving the offered annuity, which he thought must be accepted. In Oct., 1614, it appears "that the Merchant Adventurers' Company is dissolved, and the patent for making glasses is given up in favour " of those who undertake to make them with Scotch coal." Then comes a proclamation, 23rd May, 1615, "for making glass with sea and pit coal only, prohibiting the use of wood on account of the waste of timber; also prohibiting the import of foreign glass." This was the introduction of Sir Robert's patent,

which, as has been stated, included Zouch and others. Sir Jerome Bowes was removed by death in 1616, 27th March, having on the preceding 17th accepted a charge of £600 per ann. out of the new patent, in compensation for his rents under the old one. Probably the monopoly was more or less evaded, for 4th May, 1618, Sir Robert requests that Paul Vinion and Peter Cornley, glass-makers, imprisoned on his complaint for making glass with wood, may be released on bond, not to repeat the offence; and on 10th December he petitions the Council for aid to suppress all existing glass-furnaces, and imprison all offenders who infringe his patent. To quicken the Council, he hints that he will be otherwise unable to pay the £1,000 rent to the King and the £1,800 to his copatentees who have resigned; so that he was working the patent alone, much to the surprise of his well-wishers. "I marvel," said King James, "that Robert Mansel, who has won so much honour on the water, should meddle with fire."

"*Quod vult, valde vult*," says the Mansel motto, and Sir Robert seems to have acted up to it. He employed the well-known James Howell, whose letters have passed through so many editions, as travelling manager for the new manufactory which was already opened in Broad Street, London. Howell was abroad from 1618 to 1621, and visited Holland,

Flanders, France, Spain, and Italy, reporting freely to Sir Robert. His first letter, dated "1st March, 1618, Broad St.," explains his business to his father. "The main of my employment is from that gallant knight, Sir Robert Mansel, who with my Lord of Pembroke, and divers others of the prime lords of the court, have got a patent for making all sorts of glass with pit-coal only, to save those huge proportions of wood which were consumed formerly in the glass-furnaces; and this business being of that nature that the workmen are to be had from Italy, and the chief materials from Spain, France, and other foreign countries, there is need of an agent abroad for this use; and better than I have offered their service in this kind; so that I believe I shall have employments in all these countries before I return."

In the same year he writes to Dr. Mansel, probably from London: "Your honourable uncle, Sir Robert Mansel, who is now in the Mediterranean, hath been very notable to me, and I shall ever acknowledge a good part of my education from him. He hath melted vast sums of money in the glass-business, a business, indeed, more proper for a merchant than a courtier. I heard the King should say that he wondered Robin Mansel, being a seaman, whereby he hath got so much honour, should fall from water to tamper with fire, which are two contrary

elements. My father fears that this glass employment will be too brittle a foundation for me to build a fortune upon; and Sir Robert being now, at my coming back, so far at sea, and his return uncertain, my father hath advised me to hearken after some other condition."

After a short stay in London, he was succeeded by Capt. Francis Bacon. The workmen employed were chiefly Venetians. Howell, being a Jesus man, wrote occasionally to Dr. Francis Mansel, Head of that College, and Sir Robert's nephew. He wrote also to Capt. Bacon in 1619. From Middleburgh he wrote "by Signor Antonio Miotti, who was master of a crystal glass-furnace here a long time; and, as I have it by good intelligence, he is one of the ablest and most knowing men for the guidance of a glass-work in Christendom; therefore, according to my instructions, I send him over, and hope to have done Sir Robert good service thereby." From Alicant, 27th March, 1621, he writes: "I am to send hence a commodity called 'barillia' to Sir Robert Mansel, for making of crystal glass; and I have treated with Signor Andriotti, a Genoa merchant, for a good sound parcel of it, to the value of £2,000, by letters of credit from Master Richaut.... This 'barillia' is a strange kind of vegetable, and it grows nowhere upon the surface of the earth in that perfection as here.

The Venetians have it hence, and it is a commodity whereby this maritime town doth partly subsist, for it is an ingredient that goes to the making of the best Castile soap. It grows thus. 'Tis a round, thick, earthy shrub that bears berries like barberries, betwixt blue and green. It lies close to the ground; and when it is ripe, they dig it up by the roots, and put it together in cocks, where they leave it to dry many days, like hay. Then they make a pit of a fathom deep in the earth, and with an instrument like one of our prongs, they take the tufts and put fire to them; and when the flame comes to the berries they melt and dissolve into an azure liquor, and fall down into the pit till it be full; then they draw it up, and some days after they open it, and find this barillia-juice turned to a blue stone so hard that it is scarce malleable. It is sold at one hundred crowns a tun, but I had it for less. There is also a spurious flower, called 'guzull,' that grows here; but the glass that's made of that is not so resplendent or clear."

Meantime, while Howell was active abroad, the glass-makers, injured by the new patent, were moving at home. 10th Jan., 1619, Paul Vinion asked to be allowed to work up his stock of materials for glass-making laid in before the proclamation; and he offers to pay Sir Robert for the permission, or to sell him

his materials. There appears, however, to be something behind, for Sir Robert states that Vinion's petition for license to make drinking-glasses would injure his patent, and is founded on fallacious statements. Sir Robert appears to have been sent suddenly to sea, probably to protect the Narrow Seas, for the correspondence is continued by Capt. Bacon and Lady Mansel. Brand is of opinion that the first glass-works established on the Tyne were set up in this year by Sir R. Mansel.

In 1619 Sir Robert was a canopy-bearer at the Queen's funeral.

One of Howell's letters is addressed to Sir Robert from Venice, and is worth transcription :

*To the Honble. SIR ROBERT MANSELL, Vice-Admiral of  
England.*

VENICE, 30th May, 1621.

SIR,—As soon as I came to Venice I apply'd myself to dispatch your business, according to instructions, and Mr. Seymour was ready to contribute his best furtherance. These two Italians, who are the bearers hereof, by report here are the best gentlemen-workmen that ever blew crystal. One is ally'd to Antonio Miotti, the other is cousin to Mazalao. For other things, they shall be sent in the ship *Lion*, which rides here at Malamocco, as I shall send you account by conveyance of Mr. Symns. Herewith I shall have sent a letter to you from Sir Henry Wotton, the Lord Ambassador here, of whom I have received some favours. He wished me to write that you

have now a double interest in him ; for whereas before he was only your servant, he is now your kinsman by your late marriage.

I was lately to see the arsenal of Venice, one of the worthiest things in Christendom. They say there are as many gallies and galleases of all sorts, belonging to St. Mark, either in course, at anchor, in dock, or upon the careen, as there be days in the year. Here they can build a compleet galley in half a day, and put her afloat in perfect equipage, having all the ingredients fitted before hand ; as they did in three hours when Harry III passed this way to France from Poland, who wish'd that, besides Paris and his Parliament towns, he had this arsenal in exchange for three of his chiefest cities. There are 300 people perpetually here at work ; and if one comes young, and grows old in St. Mark's service, he hath a pension from the state during life. Being brought to see one of the Clarissimos that govern this arsenal, this huge sea storehouse, among other matters reflecting upon England, he was saying that if Cavaglier Don Roberto Mansel were here, he thought verily the public would make a proffer to him to be admiral of that fleet of gallies and galeons which are now going against the Duke of Ossuna and the forces of Naples, you are so well known here.

I was, since I came hither, in Murano, a little island about the distance of Lambeth from London, where crystal glass is made, and 'tis a rare sight to see a whole street where on the one side there are twenty furnaces together at work. They say here, although one should transplant a glass-furnace from Murano to Venice herself, or to any of the little assembly of islands about her, or to any other part of the earth besides, and use the same materials, the same workmen, the same fuel, the self-same ingredients, every way, yet they cannot make crystal glass in that



perfection, for beauty and lustre, as in Murano. Some impute it to the quality of the circumambient air that hangs o'er the place, which is purified and alternated by the concurrence of so many fires that are in those furnaces night and day perpetually, for they are like the Vestal fire which never goes out. And it is well known that some airs make more qualifying impressions than others, as a Greek told me in Sicilly of the air of Egypt, where there be huge common furnaces to hatch eggs by the thousands in camel's dung; for during the time of hatching, if the air happen to come to be overcast, and grows cloudy, it spoils all; if the sky continue still, serene, and clear, not one egg in a hundred will miscarry.

I met with Camillo, your corsaorman, here lately; and could he be sure of entertainment, he would return to serve you again, and, I believe, for less salary.

I shall attend your commands herein by the next, and touching other particulars whereof I have written to Captain Bacon.

So I rest, etc.

J. H.

1st June, 1621, he writes to his brother also from Venice, and says: "Since I came to this town I dispatched sundry business of good value for Sir Robert Mansell, which I hope will give content. The art of glass-making here is very highly valued, for whosoever be of that profession are gentlemen *ipso facto*; and it is not without reason, it being a rare kind of knowledge and chemistry to transmute dust and sand, etc."

He sends Dr. F. Mansel a copy of sapphics from Venice, 1621.

The year 1620 found Sir Robert about forty-seven years of age, and most busily employed. It is clear from various entries in the State Papers that all matters connected with the construction of ships and the general administration of dockyard stores received his close attention, while at the same time he had to attend, and did certainly attend, closely to the details of the glass-making business, and to the defence of his patented rights. The later cares must have been by very much the most trying to his temper, for the rising spirit of the century was vehemently opposed to monopolies, of which his was one of the least defensible. His men and material had to be imported, and the former were perpetually leaving him, tempted by high offers from his opponents and rivals both in England and Scotland. He had brought over from Venice John Maria dell'Acqua, who left him to be master of the glass-works in Scotland, where however he stayed but a short time and returned to England. Sir Robert accused Mr. Ward, the goldsmith of Cheapside, and others of having seduced him. February, 1620, he sent Howgill and Greene to the Marshalsea for importing foreign glass. They alleged that his glass was bad, and that he had supplied them with his worst for the king's new buildings at Newmarket. Colbourne, the hour-glass maker to the commissioner for glass, also complained

that he was forced to buy Sir Robert's London glass, which was bad and high priced. He wishes leave to purchase at Sir Robert's other works, and asks that glass imported contrary to the proclamation, and claimed by Sir Robert, may be held in charge till it be seen whether he can supply glass sufficient. The glaziers also complain that the glass is bad, brittle, and dear; and they ask encouragement for the Scottish works. Sir Robert meets all this by asserting that the scarcity of glass arose from no fault of his; that he has spent much in improving its quality; and that its high price is caused by the high price of coal. Then follow conflicting reports as to quality. Four glaziers assert some to be bad, but the most part serviceable. The Glazier's Company find most unserviceable. Inigo Jones, as surveyor of works, finds the glass mixed, good and bad, and very thin in the middle. These attacks were sharpened by a proclamation, a month before, enforcing the provisions of the patent. Mention is made for a grant for a looking-glass manufactory, to which Sir Robert objects. It was about this time that he was engaged with nine other Commissioners in investigating the abuses in the transport of iron ordnance. As usual the manufacture was a monopoly. It was in the hands of a Mr. Brown, who held a king's patent, and was confined to two furnaces. The merchants requested that they also might be

supplied, which the Commissioners recommended. Brown was in controversy with one Crowe, who had a patent to supply the merchant service. The guns seems to have been cast in Kent or Sussex.

After all this it is a relief to find the old sailor once more preparing to appear upon his proper element. 18th January, 1620, it is reported that he is to be admiral of a fleet to be despatched against the Algerine pirates; so that now he hoped to profit by the advice he had given the Lord High Admiral to employ the time of peace in building ships of war. In July it was understood that there was really to be an Algerine expedition, and that Sir Robert was to command it. This expedition, though pressed forwards by the London merchants, who suffered much from the Barbary Corsairs, was not popular in the country; there was a notion that it was prompted by Gondomar to make England discharge duties which otherwise would fall to the lot of Spain.

The fleet was composed of six king's ships, ten merchantmen, and two pinnaces, in all eighteen sail, of which sixteen were commanded as follows :

	Tons	Men.	Brass Guns.	
Lion . . .	600 .	250 .	40 .	Sir R. Mansel, Admiral.
Vanguard . . .	660 .	250 .	40 .	Sir R. Hawkins, Vice.
Rainbow . . .	660 .	250 .	40 .	Sir Thom. Rutton, Rear.
Constant Reformation	660 .	250 .	40 .	Captain Mainwaring.
Antelope . . .	400 .	160 .	34 .	Sir H. Palmer.
Convertive . . .	500 .	220 .	36 .	Capt. Thom. Lee.

## Iron Guns.

Golden Phoenix	. 300	. 120	. 24	. Capt. Sam. Argall.
Samuel	. 300	. 120	. 22	. Chr. Harris.
Marygold	. 260	. 100	. 21	. Sir John Frere.
Zouch-Phoenix	. 280	. 120	. 26	. John Pennington.
Barbary	. 280	. 80	. 18	. Sir John Haunden.
Hercules	. 300	. 120	. 24	. Eusaby Cave.
Neptune	. 280	. 120	. 21	. Robt. Haughton.
Merchant-Bonaventura	260	. 110	. 23	. John Chidley.
Restore	. 130	. 50	. 12	. Geo. Raymond.
Marmaduke	. 100	. 50	. 12	. Thomas Herbert.

It appears from a subsequent letter, 19th July 1621, from Sir Robert to Buckingham, that Button, a most inveterate grumbler, took offence at Sir Robert, because he was not made Vice-Admiral. Sir Robert explains that he had engaged Hawkins, a very grave, religious, and experienced gentleman, before he knew that Button would resign his Irish appointment. He expresses himself with great kindness towards Button, and requests that on his return he may be restored to his former command. It appears, therefore, that the selection of officers was left to the commander.

Sir Robert's commission of 20th July, 1620, is given by Rymer both in French and English. It styles him Vice-Admiral of England, Admiral of the present fleet, and Captain-General, with power to press seamen and exercise martial law. Hawkins was to succeed under a special commission dated 3rd October, 1620, in the event of the Admiral's death. Sir Robert had a sign manual for £3,000 towards the charges of the

service, and Button had a free gift of £1,452 for special service.

While these preparations were going forward the navy commissioners had reported on his accounts as treasurer for the past five years of office. They pointed out various abuses, which however do not seem to have been of a character calling for reprehension. In August he accounted to the king for the £1,000 due for the glass patent, and for his balances as Vice-Admiral, and for the whole fourteen years of his treasurership, and he claimed £10,000 arrears for travelling expenses. His first orders were to Captain Pennington to survey his provisions, stores, and ordnance, and to muster his crew.

The fleet weighed anchor in the Thames in August. 2nd September, a south-west wind kept the ships of the river's mouth. 4th September, they reached the Downs, but the wind was still contrary, so that on the 5th the Admirals supped with Sir Dudley Digges at Chilham, and Sir Robert rode post to Court, ostensibly to take leave, but probably to procure some further stores which the parsimony of ministers had withheld. It was surmised that there was something concealed, and that so rich an equipage could not be intended merely to attack a nest of pirates.

The fleet finally sailed from Plymouth Sound

12th October. They touched at Cadiz, where Captain Roper, Lady Mansel's brother, died. His body was sent home, and landed at Dover 12th December, but there seems to have been another captain of the same name on board. While Sir Robert was absent, Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador, seems to have attempted to undermine his credit at home, but the king, in answer to a charge of underhand dealing with the Algerines, showed unwonted spirit. "Thank you," said he to the Spaniard, "that I can believe this? I, who have chosen himself for that I know him to be valiant, honest, and nobly descended as any in my kingdom. Never will I believe him guilty of so base an action." On the whole James seems to have been true to "Robin Mansel," as he called him.\* It was probably with reference to this charge, whatever it might be, of the Spanish Government, that in the following year, 13th June, 1621, Sir Walter Aston, writes from Madrid to the Marquis of Buckingham, Lord Admiral, to say "that he has been careful to stop certain scandals upon the proceedings of Sir R. Mansel with the fleet. He has had no letter from Sir Robert since he left the coast, but has news that he was at Majorca on the last day of May, old

\* No doubt Gondomar may have promoted, and did promote, the expedition; but he may also have preferred to see it in other hands than those of Sir Robert.

style, and that he had not yet been before Argirs. He intends to acquaint Sir Robert with the complaints against him, and when he understands from Sir Robert the truth or not of this error he will place this statement before the Spanish Government, when no doubt they will find they have been too ready to credit the aspersion." [Camden Society, *Fortescue Papers*, p. 152.]

Gondomar was attacked in the streets of London, and one of the rioters was publicly whipped from Aldgate to Temple Bar for his share in the business. It was said that Gondomar, with James's connivance, had transported ordnance and munitions of war from England to Spain.

The fleet reached Gibraltar roads 31st October, and there they heard from the Spaniards of the ravages committed by the Algerines. Two pirate ships had engaged seven Spanish galleys, and slain 400 men. They had in one fleet thirty ships and ten galleys, and had even threatened Gibraltar.

2nd November Sir Robert sailed from Malaga roads, and reported progress through the English ambassador with the Court of Spain. He sailed for Alicant in three squadrons; the admiral six leagues from the shore. The weather becoming calm the admiral hoisted St. George's flag as a summons to the captains and masters to a general council, and it was decided to place two ships of light draught



next the shore to sweep the inlets, and the password for recognition was "Greenwich Tower." 10th November they were off Mattrill Point, and on the 19th dropped anchor in Alicant roads. Here thirty-six sick men were sent ashore from the admiral's ship alone. Their numbers were made good from the "Goodwill," which vessel was left behind. Here they laid in wine and water; and on the 25th sailed for Algiers, off which place they arrived on the 27th November.

They cast anchor in twenty-seven fathoms water, out of the range of the Castle, and saluted, but the civility was not returned. Nevertheless flags of truce were exchanged and civil speeches passed, and hostages offered for the officer who might be sent on shore with the King's letters to the Pasha. Meantime the pirates brought in three prizes, of which two were English. Captain John Roper was selected to deliver the letters, and after two attempts two hostages were sent and he landed. On the 3rd December, six Spanish ships of war arrived in pursuit of pirates, and exchanged cannon shots with the town.

As the Algerines did not behave in good faith and showed a disposition to detain Captain Roper, Sir Robert had recourse to a ruse. He dressed up a seaman as consul and sent him off. He was received with respect, and forty English captives were given up, and it was pretended they were all they had. This seems

to have been all the real result of the expedition.

On the 8th the fleet weighed and went to seek provisions at Majorca, proposing to return in the spring. On the 24th they fell in with eight or nine sail of Turks and gave chase, without success. On the 26th they were in Alicant roads, expecting provisions from England, which had not arrived, and next day the rear-admiral left to seek two pirates. On the 4th January two more ships left the fleet on a similar errand, but equally without success. On the 6th the vice-admiral sailed for Malaga to victual, and on the 12th the rear-admiral made another unsuccessful quest, and they received letters from England. On the 27th the fleet sailed and fell in with a Flemish fleet also in search of pirates. 31st they were again off Alicant.

February found the rear-admiral again after pirates. On the 6th they sailed for Malaga, and on the 16th were joined by the vice-admiral, who had victualled his squadron.

28th February, 1621, Edward Piers, a king's messenger, claimed expenses for fifty-eight days attendance on Sir R. Mansel. The Government was uncertain as to how long the fleet would be absent, and had to consider the question of fresh supplies, and the renewal of Sir Robert's commission, should he be absent six months longer. In March the Court gossip was "that the fleet had done nothing but negotiate with the

pirates of Algiers for the liberation of some slaves. They had many discourtesies in Spain, but these things are dangerous to speak of."

It appears that Sir Robert was encumbered with advice, for "the council of war having decided on manning and victualling the *Satira*, a polacca out of the fleet," he ordered Pennington to spare three men with victuals, arms, etc. 29th May the admiral informed Pennington that the road of Algiers is their place of rendezvous, and the admirals are to hang out their lights so as to keep together. No vessel is to be chased unless the fleet can be regained that night."

25th January Captain Roper was dispatched home with letters, and 27th the fleet fell in with seven sail of Flemings under the Admiral of Zealand, who informed Sir Robert he had twenty-two ships of war cruising about the straits. 16th February, being off Gibraltar, provisions arrived from England with Captain Pett of the *Mercury* of 240 tons, 65 men, and 20 brass guns, besides two or three merchantmen. At Alicant the admiral bought three brigantines and hired a polacca to carry materials for fire-ships, and 21st May, 1621, they were again off Algiers.

They anchored on a north and south line, the Admiral in the middle; on the north side the *Reformation*, *Phoenix*, and *Antelope*; on the south the

Golden Phoenix and Convertive, and the merchantmen a little astern. Two Turkish prizes of a hundred and of sixty tons were prepared as fire-ships, as were the three brigantines and a "Gunlod." There were also many armed boats to cover the retreat of those who fired the ships. On the 24th the wind served, and the fleet stood in to within musket shot of the mole, when it fell, and they could not sail in. The moon shone, but as they learned from a Christian slave who swam off that the ships within were unguarded, the fire-ships were exploded, and a brisk attack made. They lost about six men, but the success was inconsiderable, and the fleet sailed on the 25th, of which four sail of pirates took advantage to enter the harbour.

The 28th the Bonaventura and Hercules drove a pirate on shore with 130 Turks and 12 Christians. All were drowned save twelve Turks. The 30th they were again off Algiers, and learned from two Genoese slaves that the Turks had thrown a boom across the entrance, and made other preparations of a most formidable character. The attempt was, therefore, abandoned, and the fleet proceeded homewards.

On the arrival of the fleet a journal of the expedition, kept by J.B., from its sailing 12th October, 1620, to its return 3rd August, 1621, was laid before the council. It gave the daily particulars of what was done by each ship. This was printed, with

annotations, by John Coke. The fleet did not reach the Downs till 22nd September. This expedition was much discussed and severely commented upon. As late as 16th March, 1626, a paper of comments on Sir Robert's conduct was addressed to the council. The merchants of London seem to have been satisfied. "The English fleet," it was said, "performed gallantly, and rushing within the reach of cannon and small shot, which from the land showered like hail upon them, fired the pirates' ships within their own harbour." No doubt too favourable an account. It was thought by others that most of the officers selected were without experience, and that the equipment was insufficient for the purpose. On his return Sir Robert was at once called upon to protect the Narrow Seas, towards which service the London merchants subscribed freely, though, 2nd October, they declined to honour a bill for £399, drawn upon them by the Admiral, for which they were reprimanded by the council. Among the expenses of this fleet was a payment to Sir Walter Cope, Bart., of £120 for 300 swords at 8s. each.

During Sir Robert's absence the glass business improved, and 4th April, 1621, the Glaziers' Company report that his glass is good, cheap, and plentiful, and 13th April they petition against a bill brought forward by some of his rivals in the manufacture. In May he addressed the Lord Treasurer as to a demand from

Turner, of £200 out of the rent of £2,000 payable by Sir Robert to the crown for his glass houses, and he points out that the King's interference as to the Scottish manufacture has so affected his profits that his rents ought to be reduced. 18th June the council directed that as the consideration of Sir Robert's patent was postponed till his return, no glass was to be allowed to be imported to its infringement. Nevertheless the rivals were active. Parliament, it seems, had twice pronounced against the patent as a monopoly, and the glassmakers, headed by Isaac Bunyard, offer the king a bribe of £500 to allow a free manufacture, and undertake to sell glass 2s. a pound below Sir Robert. Bunyard, however, carried his opposition too far, and was imprisoned. Lady Mansel is willing that he should be let out, if he will promise not to infringe the patent. This he declines to do.

The Algerine accounts seem, as usual with navy matters, to have long remained unsettled. The surveyor of marine victuals petitioned with reference to victuals lost or spoiled in the Algerine expedition. 27th April, 1622, "Sir Robert and his crew are ill paid, and Sir Richard Hawkins, the Vice-Admiral, is dead of vexation." In this year Sir Robert was returned for Glamorgan as "Sir Robert Mansel, Knight, Vice-Admiral." He also seems still to have acted as treasurer of the navy, and received £5,555 16s. to

provide shipping for the Queen of Bohemia. Captain Squibb, one of the officers in the Algerine fleet, had, 22nd November, 1622, a commission given him for having assisted the admiral in discovering and taking possession of Mount Mansel, probably an Algerine work so called.

13th February, 1623, the ghost of the old patentees reappears in the form of Lady Mary Vere. Her brother, Thomas Tracy, was one of the nine patentees for making glass with sea coal, on payment of £1,000 per annum to the king, and £260 to the patentees for the glass-houses, etc. When Sir R. Mansel decided to engross the whole trade, he promised to pay all expenses, and allow each patentee £200 per annum, and now she complains that he is seeking a new patent which will release him from these engagements.

20th March Sir Robert is on the Narrow Seas, for reference is made to a state barge which he has on the coast. Lady Mansel, a most zealous wife, is as usual active in his behalf. 7th July Sir William Clavel, who has been seducing Sir Robert's workmen for the Scottish works, justifies his conduct by alleging that Lady Mansel tampers with his people.

In reply she says "it is only with such as formerly served her husband." In July, 1623, certain artificers in glass-making petition the council that Lady Mansel be called upon either to allow their old wages or to

discharge them, as they are starved by her reductions. The council called on Lady Mansel for a reply. The result was the committal of Sir William to the Marshalsea, whence he petitions, 22nd August, 1623, to be let out, on the ground of ill health, and that his offence was not wilful.

In April, 1624, Sir Robert's patent is before the House of Commons on Bunyard's petition, and is defended by showing that the patent introduced sea coal to the great saving of wood, and that under it furnaces were set up by Sir Robert in London, Purbeck, Milford Haven, and on the Trent, all which failed, and finally, with success, at Newcastle-on-Tyne. That Bunard adulterated the clay, enticed away the workmen, and raised the price of Scotch coal; that the patent, though complained against in Parliament, was allowed to stand over until Sir Robert's return from sea service; that he sued for and obtained a new patent, which now he requests Parliament to ratify, on the ground that he saves wood, employs much shipping in the transport of materials and glass, and supports 4,000 natives in the manufacture of a better and cheaper article than was ever before made. To this it was replied that the invention was practised by others before the patentees, that the poor glassmakers are thereby much injured, and that the price of glass is raised. Both statements were printed.



6th May, 1624, Sir Robert brings forward a project for increasing the navy by adding double decks with loopholes for cannon to 200 merchant ships, at a cost of £30,000, a plan which secretary Conway presses upon the council. 12th May Sir Robert is about to go afloat, and 13th May claims precedence as a "general at sea." 2nd July he has £555 15s. for rewards to those who fired the pirate ships, for expenses of travelling to the coast of Spain, and for other extraordinary charges. In this year great exertions were made and "press and conduct money" expended to raise men to aid the Elector Frederick to recover the Palatinate. Among the warrants issued by the Council of War in November, addressed to the local collector of subsidies, is one printed in the *Arch. Cambrensis* (Anno 1866, p. 152), which is signed by Sir Robert Mansel and Sir Thomas Button as members of the council of war.

King James died in March, 1625. At his funeral Sir Robert bore the banner of Darnley impaling Scotland.

17th August, 1625, at a debate in the Commons, then sitting at Oxford, upon supply, it appeared that the Duke of Buckingham had justified a certain expedition by saying that he had proceeded by the advice of the council of war. This brought up Sir Robert Mansel, who denied this, and undertook "to

prove that the expenditure in question was not well counselled, nor likely to prosper." A spirited discussion followed, when complaint was made of the piracies on the western coast, the blame of which was laid on Buckingham, then Lord Admiral. The house adjourned upon "the bold avouchment of Sir Robert Mansel, and the next day was appointed for him to make good what he had said." Sir Robert was contradicted by Heath, and examined before the council. His attack on the duke was much talked of. John Drake of Ash takes the duke's part, as it would appear did Drake's cousin, James Bagg, the Vice-Admiral of Cornwall. Buckingham seems to have replied in person at a conference between the two Houses, 16th March, 1626. Of course so independent a line of conduct was not likely to lead to active employment. 26th March, 1626, Sir Robert's kinsman, Sir T. Button, writing to Captain Pennington, then in commission, wishes him to write sometimes to Sir R. Mansel, who holds himself neglected by all men in present employment. Fortunately for Sir Robert his glass patent was too deeply identified with the cause of prerogative to be thrown over by the Crown, and it does not appear again to have been attacked in Parliament. In December, 1626, when the subject was brought before the council by the King on the petition of one Bringer, they came to a conclusion that "the patent

shall stand." They "think it will be a dangerous consequence, and far trenching upon the prerogative, that patents granted on just grounds and of long continuance should be referred to the strict trial of the common law, wherefore they order that all proceedings at law be stayed." And in accordance with these views, 18th February, 1628, the ship "Four Sisters" is protected by the council, that she may fetch coal for Sir R. Mansel's glass houses."

28th November, 1628, Sir Robert shows his friendship for Sir T. Button by some good advice, and in this year on a debate on supply he said, "It had been much better for us to have taken care for these provisions three years ago. His majesty's desire is not to have us overburthened, yet seven of these propositions are not to be neglected, namely, the safe guarding of the coasts, the defence of the Elbe, the defence of Rochelle, the increasing of the navy, the repairing of the forts, the discharge of the arrears of merchant ships, and the defence of the King of Denmark. The other seven may be deferred till our next meeting at Michaelmas." [Hansard.]

In 1629, as Vice-Admiral of England, he had a very complete muster of the watermen of the port of London, 2,453 in number, and soon after a muster of the seafaring men and mariners of the port and liberties, and finally a survey of the ships in the same port,

showing their burthen, age, ordnance, owners, and masters.

In 1621, 25th June, he inspected the ships of war at Chatham and Rochester.

The glass manufacture was still continued, and 6th August, 1630, Thomas, Earl of Arundel, who has lately had a patent signed by the king, and understands that it is thought to entrench upon that granted to Sir Robert Mansel, consents to the insertion of the words "glass and glassworks only excepted." Also, 8th August, Sir Robert procures the insertion of certain words in a bill granting "a priviledge for the use of turf and peat for making iron."

15th and 16th June, 1631, the king was at Rochester and Chatham inspecting ships, and with Sir R. Mansel went aboard every ship, and into the holds of most of them. The inspection seems to have been of a most complete and searching character.

22nd July, 1621, Sir Robert writes to secretary Dorchester on behalf of an old sailor, Captain Penn, who has got into debt. He asks an extension of the Captain's protection "for eight months, by which time he does not doubt to compass his debts." 21st April, 1632, he is summoned to attend the Board of Admiralty to give advice as to the complements and manning of the king's ships; and 8th May, a proposition by Captain Pennington on this subject is referred to him.

Before answering the questions of the Admiralty Board, Sir Robert and the other officers consulted find it necessary to obtain the measurements of the ships. An allowance is ordered for this purpose, and 30th May this was going forward. 5th July further meetings and discussions on the subject of measurement are in progress. It is said that Sir Robert had some other and sinister object in view in the desired measurements.

16th July, 1632, Sir Robert writes from Greenwich to Captain John Pennington on a variety of subjects, partly on behalf of his nephew Sir Thomas Button, then in trouble with the Admiralty, and partly on naval matters, transport of ordnance, etc. 5th January, 1633, a certificate is signed in favour of Sir R. Mansel, Lieutenant of the Admiralty, for "liberate" of his fee of 10s. per day. 22nd February, 1633, his return concerning the manning the ships is not yet sent in.

22nd May, 1633, the assigns of Sir Robert Mansel appear as to possession of a ballast quay or staithe at the glass-house, Newcastle. The quays were in bad order, and the ballast from them threatened to impede the navigation. It would seem that Sir Robert had assigned the manufactory away. 4th Jan., 1633-34, he had a certificate, as Lieutenant of the Admiralty, for £182 10s., being at the rate of 10s. per day. On the 7th February, he was at Deptford, taking an active part in the launch of the Unicorn man-of-war.

5th March he was consulted by Secretary Windebank as to a wages complaint by the carpenters at Woolwich.

28th Jan., 1634-35, appears a statement of the costs, difficulties, and losses sustained by Sir Robert Mansel in the business of glass. He was out of purse above £30,000 before the manufacture could be perfected, the occasion of which he explains in detail. During his absence in Algiers his patent was declared void by the House of Commons. The consideration of his charges moved the late king to grant him a patent for fifteen years, but before he could obtain any fruit from it, his workmen and servants were drawn into Scotland, and most of the glass here sold imported from thence, so that he had to purchase the Scotch patent at £250 per annum. After his men returned from Scotland, they made such bad glass that he brought a whole company from Mantua. Then Vicon, his clerk, ran away, and much encouraged a ruinous importation of drinking glasses from France, which was stopped by order of council, 25th June, 1632.

Since then he has been at great charges making looking-glass and spectacle glass plates, and yet has not raised the price of glass one penny. For window glass the price is now certain, and more moderate than formerly, albeit the assize is more by 40 per cent. than it used to be. When he got the new patent he hoped to repair his fortune; but his men

were again drawn into Scotland; and Crispe, his tenant, endeavoured to gain a branch of the patent, and offered for the whole, all which he submits to the king's consideration. It is a sad story, and enough almost to make one sympathize with the owner of a monopoly.

There had always been a fear of Scottish competition. The patent eventually bought up by Sir Robert was originally granted for thirty-one years from 1610, to Lord George Hay, who sold it for a considerable sum of money to Thomas Robinson, merchant tailor of London, of whom Sir Robert bought it.

In this year he certified to the convenience of the North and South Foreland lights.

7th April, 1635, Sir R. Mansel and others agree to the plot and dimensions of the great ship proposed by Captain Pett. She is to be 127 feet on the keel, greatest breadth 46 feet 2 inches, three tiers of ports, tonnage by depth 1,466 tons, by mean breadth 1,836 tons. So that there were then two ways in use of estimating tonnage.

30th May, Robert, Earl of Lindsey has a naval command, and being created Admiral and General for the occasion, claims the equipage of a standard, as though he were Lord Admiral of England. He justifies his claim by the precedents of "men of eminent quality," and cites Lord Arundel and Sir Robt. Mansel.

To these he afterwards, 28th June, adds the name of the Earl of Rutland.

Sir Robert's petition to the king seems to have met at last with a response, for 14th Oct., is settled a proclamation concerning the import of foreign glass. It recites a proclamation of 23rd May, 1615, prohibiting the use of wood in glass making, and the importation of glass. It recites also that Sir Robert Mansel, Lieutenant of the Admiralty, had perfected the manufacture of glass with sea or pit coal to the saving of wood, etc., and forbids, under penalties, any infractions of the patent. Sir Robert was allowed to import glass from Moravia, etc.

25th April, 1635, Sir Robert is one of the council for New England, sitting at Whitehall, and in May, 1637, his name is found in a commission for a council of war, originally constituted in 1629. The duty as defined in June following embraced a very wide scope, and combined the duties of the modern War Office and Horse Guards, besides being extended to the naval service.

5th November, 1637, appears the final account connected with the Algerine expedition, being a certificate that Sir Robert Mansel, Lord General of the fleet to Algiers, had for his entertainment at the Red Lion for 318 days, from 20th August, 1620, to 3rd September, 1621, 53s. 4d. per diem, or £848.



15th December occurs a petition from Moore and others, hour-glass makers, declaring that for many years they have bought merchant's hour-glass vials, ready for use, at 7s. the gross, and the ware is so bad that they often lose one dozen in four. The petition is sent to Sir Robert, who is to attend the Board.

2nd January, 1637-8, appears a certificate from the Admiralty that Sir R. Mansel had daily travelled about the affairs of their office from 1st January, 1636-7, to 31st Dec. following, which at 10s. per day is £182 10s.

12th January, to the glass-dealers' charges Sir Robert responds that the dearness was the result of the rise in price of all materials; that the scarcity was due to the mortality among the Newcastle workmen and the want of shipping, and, as for the defective quality, all glass broken in the working up should be exchanged. The Lords expressed themselves so far satisfied, but as of their knowledge they found the glass was not so fair, so clear, nor so strong as it was wont to be, they called Sir Robert's attention to these points. Also some directions were directed in the mode of dealing with window glass. The hour-glass makers were further told that their complaints were frivolous, and that if they repeated them they would be committed to prison.

5th February, 1637-8, Sir R. Mansel had a lease, on the surrender of a former lease, of certain lands

and glass-houses on the Tyne, for twenty-one years, at 20s. per annum from the corporation of Newcastle. 2nd April is another certificate for travelling expenses on public business for one quarter, £42.

In 1640 the Government was engaged in the contest for ship money, and Mr. Evans, the Escheater of Glamorgan, and John Carne, the Sheriff, were in correspondence with the Lord Treasurer about the arrears from their county. It appears that only £50 remained due, being the share of the Corporation of Cardiff, and this was expected speedily. Carne was connected with the Mansels, whose interest was probably on the side of the Government.

In this year also Sir Robert was in correspondence with Secretary Windebank on the subject of his Newcastle establishment, then specially engaged upon window glass. There were three furnaces at work when the Scots lay before Newcastle, and there were 1,200 cases of glass, worth £1,500, in stock, packed, and ready to be sent to the South. His loss upon the stoppage of the works was heavy. His workmen and their families, 60 persons, fled, but still claimed wages. The Scots also stopped the export of coal, so that his London works were short of fuel, and he feared the consequence would be that his workmen, mostly foreigners, would quit the kingdom, and so his great outlay, not less than £30,000, be lost. The Crown

has an impending demand upon him for £750 for six months rent, and £300 is due or will be to Lord Kinnoul. His immediate pressure is for the support of the enforced idle workmen, and he finds it impracticable to fulfil his contract to supply the kingdom with glass. He asks the Government for power to employ two or three ships to convey his glass and coal to London. This was in September. A few weeks later the Glass-sellers' Company in London were petitioning the House of Commons to compel all independent manufacturers to become members of the Company.

In April, 1642, the glassmakers are again encroaching on his patent. Bristowe and Bagge petition the Privy Council that their cause against Sir Robert may be heard, or referred to the House of Commons, and they complain of his insults and injuries.

In 1642 when Northumberland and his deputy High Admiral were thought to lean towards the Parliament and had to resign their commissions, such was Sir Robert's reputation that Sir John Pennington suggested that he should be sent to the command of the wavering fleet. He was then resident at Greenwich. Charles, while he admitted his experience and his loyalty, thought the fatiguing character of the duty too much for so aged a man. He lived nevertheless, several years longer. 17th September, 1652,

he petitioned the Common Council for a new lease of certain lands, six years of his existing lease having expired. This was refused, and was probably his last public appearance. According to Brand [*History of Newcastle*, i, 43-45] he was dead 12th August, 1653, aged upwards of eighty.

There is some doubt about his wives. The State Papers show that in 1616 he married a Mrs.—probably as we should now say Miss—Roper, a maid of honour to the Queen. He was then about forty-three. The ordinary pedigrees say he married thrice, first a widow of Judge Wyndham. This must be Francis Wyndham, a judge of the Common Pleas, who died July, 1592, having married Jane, daughter of Sir Nicholas Bacon. She is said by Foss to have married, on his death, Sir Robert Mansfield, but this name is once or twice used in the State Papers for Mansel, and Mansel Island in the Arctic regions has been transformed into “Mansfield.” His second wife is said to have been Ann, daughter of Sir John Ralph, and his third Elizabeth, a daughter of Sir Nicholas Bacon. Here however arises considerable confusion, which is by no means cleared up by the will of Sir Nathaniel Bacon, already cited, although it is unusually specific and copious in its mention of family and kin. Sir Nicholas mentions his sisters Mansfield, Periam and Mansel, and his brother Mansel, so that in this case

Mansfield and Mansel could scarcely have been one person. Two of the sisters must have married Mansfield and Mansel, and both and the latter husband were alive in 1614. The Baronetage is at variance with the testament, and is therefore probably wrong. It makes Jane Bacon, widow of Judge Wyndham, wife of Sir Robert Mansfield, and Elizabeth wife of Sir William Periam: these were the two daughters of Edward Bacon, a younger brother of the testator, and therefore his nieces. The Lady who was Sir Robert's wife in 1620, and who fought his trade battles so gallantly, was Elizabeth Lady Mansel. Sir Robert left no issue. His portrait, with others of the family, is preserved at Penrice, the Mansel seat in Gower. It has not been engraved.





## ADMIRAL SIR THOMAS BUTTON, KNT.

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SIR THOMAS BUTTON was famous in an age and in a profession in which fame was not to be lightly won. He was a seaman bred in the school of Raleigh and Drake in the times of Elizabeth, and one of a not inconsiderable band who attained to eminence in the otherwise inglorious reign of James by their adventures and discoveries in the Arctic regions, and who maintained the repute of bold and skilful mariners by their defence of the Narrow Seas of England and Ireland against the privateers of France and the pirate galleys of Algiers and Turkey, by which those seas were infested in the reign of our Stuart Kings.

Sir Thomas was fourth son of Miles Button of Worlton, otherwise Duffryn, in the parish of St. Nicholas, in Glamorgan, and Sheriff of that county in 1564 and 1570, by Margaret, daughter of Edward Lewis of Van, a very old and considerable Welsh family in the same county, of whom the Cromwells of Hinchinbrook were probably cadets. The Buttons, though "Advenæ"



in Wales, had been seated at Worlton, an alienated manor of the see of Llandaff, for about seven generations, and had intermarried freely with the pure Welsh gentry.

Sir Thomas was probably born at Worlton late in the sixteenth century, and seems to have been well educated, and sent to sea as early as 1592. He must have achieved early distinction, for 25th March, 1604, the Lord Admiral, Nottingham, who was connected through the Stradlings with Glamorganshire, directed Sir Thomas Lake to fill up the blank in the Privy Seal of the pension granted to Capt. Thomas Button, whose pension for service in Ireland was given away on a rumour of his death in the Indies, with the sum of 5s. 8d. per diem, considered to be a fair equivalent. This early service was probably the capture with Capt. Newport of two or three frigates in the West Indies, which, March, 1603, "are now with three millions of gold at Milford Haven, or some port in Ireland or in Barbary," though to please the Queen she is made to believe that the spoil is in harbour in Wales. [State Papers, Dom. March, 1608, p. 299.] No doubt the amount of the gold was greatly exaggerated, but must nevertheless have been considerable. It appears from an entry in the State Papers that he had a ship, as Capt. Button, in August, 1609, of which ship Captain Wood was to have charge.

In 1610 he was one of the "Incorporated discoverers of the North West Passage," of which company Prince Henry was the patron, and in 1611-12 he was engaged, probably under the influence of the Prince, by the merchants of London, to follow up the recent discoveries of Hudson, at that time the subject of general attention in the commercial world. His two ships bore the then unknown names of the "Resolution" and the "Discovery." With these he sailed from England in the Spring of 1612, traversed Hudson's Straits just south of Resolution Isle, and though much impeded by ice, reached Digges' Isle, where he put together a pinnace which he had brought out, and accompanied by it pushed to the southern point of Southampton Island, to which he gave the name of "Careys Swan's Nest." Thence, finding the sea open, he steered into the bay, expecting to proceed unchecked to Japan. Before him however rose the high land of the mainland of America, forming the western shore of Hudson's Bay, and there, in the mouth of Nelson River, then discovered by him and so named from his ship's master, he passed, from August, the Arctic winter, near a point which he called, in the depth of his disappointment, "Hope Checked." During the winter he displayed the resources of a true Arctic commander, amusing and instructing his men during the nights, and giving them lessons in navigation.

During the day they killed game, bringing in above 1800 white partridges, upon which they fed. He defended his ships by piles against the pressure of the ice; the winter however was very severe, and he lost several men. His special attention seems to have been directed to observations on the variation of the compass, then but little known, and to the recording these and other conclusions in a diary, now lost. Early in 1613 he was again in motion, exploring the mouth of the river, which he named "Button's Bay," and mindful of his home, he called the adjacent land "New Wales." He then sailed North to 60 degrees and discovered Mansel (now Mansfield) Island; so named after his kinsman Sir Robert Mansel. He next seems to have sought an outlet by the strait now known as Rees' Welcome, between Southampton Island and the mainland, failing in which he returned by Hudson's Straits, made some observations by Cape Chidley on the coast of Labrador, and thence reached England in sixteen days in the Autumn of 1613, the first navigator who had explored Hudson's Bay, and touched the coast of America in that direction. He returned with a firm belief in a north-west passage from Hudson's Bay, one of his principal reasons being the existence of a strong westerly current which he called "Hubbart's Hope." Many years afterwards when the French were maturing their designs upon Canada, Nelson's River

was one of the points claimed, and Lord Preston, the English Envoy at Paris, refers to Sir Thomas Button as its discoverer. On his return he seems to have received knighthood, given by James, but deserved at the hand of Elizabeth. The London merchants, encouraged by his report, determined to send out another Glamorgan officer, Captain Gibbon, a cousin and neighbour of the Buttons, to explore the western shore of Hudson's Bay. Gibbon was pronounced by Button as "not short of any man that ever yet he carried to sea." He sailed in 1614 with two ships, taking as his mate Baffin, who afterwards became so famous, but Gibbon's success scarcely justified his friend's panegyric. The loss of Button's journal, which was in his own possession in 1629, is much to be regretted, for he appears to have been a skilled and accurate observer, and a scientific seaman. Besides knighthood, the royal approval of his voyage was manifested by his appointment of "Admiral of the King's ships on the coast of Ireland," a patent office, the duties of which extended from the Land's End into the Bristol and St. George's Channels, and which, as he speaks in 1628 of having held it for fifteen years, must have been given to him about this time. Among the lands visited by Baffin in 1615, we read of "Button's Isles."

The duties of his new office required his continual presence on the Irish Seas, where he gained considerable

credit, evidenced by his reception in August 1620, of £1,452, as a free gift for special services. In the preceding June he was very pressing for speedy supplies for the "Phoenix," then under his orders for the Irish service. This service was suspended for a short time soon after his appointment, and 12th October, 1620, he took part in the celebrated expedition against Algiers and the Algerine pirates. The fleet consisted of eighteen ships, and sailed from Plymouth Sound.

Sir Robert Mansel and Sir Richard Hawkins were Admiral and Vice, and Button the Rear-Admiral. His ship was the "Rainbow," of 660 tons, with 40 brass guns and 250 men, but what part he took in this not very successful expedition has escaped notice. No doubt he returned with the fleet in the summer of 1621, and probably resumed his duties in the stormy Irish Sea, for in 1623, the "Phoenix" was still his ship, and he was ordered to take command of her at Bristol, and pursue W. Rosekine, a Cornish gentleman, who had piratically taken two prizes. He was also to stay all suspected pirates and bring them to Bristol, unless approved by the king in person. In June, 1625, he was again seeking speedy supplies for the "Phoenix," ordered to Ireland on service, which no doubt was of a warm character, since, 4th September, eleven Turkish pirates were reported as in the Severn, and making prizes there, and next day he had orders to prepare

for Ireland, whither he was to go with three ships, sufficient, it was thought, "to bridle that people, as "they cannot expect much aid from Spain."

The state of the navy had been deplorable for many years past: even towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth the southern shores were infested by pirates, and the plague increased under her pacific successor. Among the papers printed by the Historical Manuscripts Commission is a letter from Weymouth in 1602 giving a very graphic account of the state of things. Fifteen sail of Turkish and Sallee rovers swept the coast from Plymouth to Scilly Isles, and had taken many prizes, some of them of 80 tons burthen. They swarmed in the Bristol Channel, and their favourite rendezvous was off Cardiff, under the headland of Penarth. The Turkish and Sallee pirates were as active as ever, and to them were now added others from Dunkirk and the French ports. Sir Thomas was fully justified in the complaints he made, and in his demands for ships and men.

In 1625 his name appears in a commission to enquire into the state of the navy, and he was to go to sea in the "Antelope," his nephew Capt. Oliver St. John (of Fonmon) asking Buckingham to be allowed to serve as Vice-Admiral with the "Phoenix." In March he had a privy seal, ordered in January, for £3,615 13s. 4d. for iron ordnance and shot. In August Capt. John

Pennington recommended his Lieutenant, Edward Button, probably Sir Thomas' nephew, to Buckingham to command a pinnace, and repeated the request in September. Sir Thomas also about this time certified to the services of Captain John Donne, and shews reasons to the Commissioners of the Navy why Capt. Thomas (probably his cousin and of Wenvoe) should be allowed to command when Sir Thomas is absent on business, a delegation which afterwards brought him into trouble.

At this time Button lived occasionally at Fulham, and probably was much in London, perhaps engaged in the naval enquiry. In February he writes from thence, expressing a hope to be able to wait upon the Duke of Buckingham to get orders for furnishing or calling home his ship, which had been forgotten. Edward Button was at that time engaged in cruising upon the east coast, to look out for Dunkirk ships. Harwich is his station whence he writes hoping that when Pennington's expedition comes off he may be in it. In March however he is ordered by Buckingham to convey certain Yarmouth fishermen as far as the gates of Scotland, and then on board his ship the "Aletheia," he is to cruize off Harwich as before.

26th March, still from Fulham, Button, apologizing to Pennington for his silence, begs he will attribute it to illness, not to want of respect. "There is not

"a friend to whom he would be loather to give just  
 "cause of doubt than Jack Pennington; and so he  
 "should believe if he desires to make the writer happy.  
 "He is sensible of the difficulties Pennington has to  
 "encounter. Hopes the Parliament will take a course  
 "to see things better settled, and wishes that, till that  
 "may be, he and those he loves were quit of their  
 "employments. Pennington's letters to the Lord  
 "Chamberlain were safely delivered. The writer's  
 "two days attendance on the Parliament well nigh  
 "cost him his life. News he dare not write, but fears  
 "he will have much ere long. While he is in being  
 "he will be the same to Pennington he has ever  
 "professed. Wishes him to write sometimes to Sir  
 "Robert Mansel, who holds himself neglected by all  
 "men in present employment." Pennington was at  
 that time on active service in the "Red Lion" off  
 Plymouth, and Mansel was much out of favour for  
 having opposed Buckingham in the House of Commons  
 in the previous year. In November, 1626, Captain  
 Button, probably Edward, was in command of the  
 "Mary Magdalen" at Portsmouth.

Sir Thomas Button himself had been out of favour  
 with the all powerful Duke, probably from his con-  
 nexion with Sir R. Mansel, for 7th July, 1627, Sir  
 Henry Mervyn, commanding the "Happy Entrance"  
 in the Downs, tells Secretary Nicholas that he is



"glad that Tom Button is restored to the Duke's "favour," and calls him "an honest and able gentleman." Captain St. John also evidently builds somewhat upon his relationship to Sir Thomas. In October an estimate is made that the repairs of the "Phoenix" will cost £200. Button is at Bristol, but the recent press for men has made them difficult to obtain. He proposes to alter the "Antelope" as he altered the "St. Andrew," expects to sail in a day or two, but the weather has been persistently contrary.

The Admiral left King Road 7th November and carried five weeks' provisions. He sprung a leak and put into Scilly, but 11th December was at Plymouth with the "Antelope" and Capt. St. John, and wrote to Buckingham a report of his cruise. In his way round his regular provisions were expended, except his beer, but he has those intended for the Isle of Rhé, which would last thirty-four days. Beer figures heavily as an item in naval stores in those days. In 1644, the "8th Whelp," a King's ship, was being refitted at Glasgow, and very considerable sums are entered against Capt. Kerse [Keyser] for beef, candles, and beer. He found French ships off the Severn, and asks for aid to enable him to cope with them. His own ships were not very sound. He was hopeful of the "Rainbow" and "Bonaventura," but he feared the "Esperance" and the rest. Mervyn commands

in the Narrow Seas and Palmer in the West. Before guarding the Severn he is to go to Rhé, where he supposes the Duke to be. His ship has to be graved, which will take fourteen days. From Plymouth he sailed to Portsmouth, where Mervyn reported his arrival 12th December, and whence he wrote from the "Antelope" in Catwater. He decided, should the merchant ships not be ready, to sail the King's ships without them. He was now under orders for Ireland and much pressed by the Admiralty to get under weigh. He is evidently regarded as a Tartar. "What Sir Thomas writes, I know not," wrote Sir James Bagg to Nicholas, "but you know his way." The carpenters however were engaged, and the "Rainbow" and "Bonaventure" not ready. Bagg was too busy to furnish provisions, and Button wanted "powder, provisions, and men." He also complained of scant respect, not having been of late addressed as "Admiral of the King's ships on the coast of Ireland," a post he has held fifteen years.

8th January, 1628, he wrote again to Buckingham complaining of Bagg and the carpenters, but expecting to sail in fourteen or sixteen days. He asks for warrants and instructions, and suggests four ships as the fewest for his command. On 12 January the "Rainbow" was at Plymouth Quay, and the "Bonaventure" at Saltash, ready to be repaired; one of his ships was

called the "Joan." Sir Thomas and Captain Thomas his subordinate will be ready in fourteen days. On the 19th he wrote to Nicholas on the general fear of an invasion, urges more ships for Ireland, and to command them his kinsman, Captain Rice (of Dynevor), as Vice-Admiral, Capt. Wm. Thomas, his own nephew, and others of his own name and family he recommends for other ships. He promised—discreditable to the age rather than the man—£100 to Nicholas for his favour, and shewed the profit that would arise if he would stop the trade of the Easterlings round the west coast of Ireland. These representations seem to have had their effect, for 8th February, Button, Mervyn, Bagg, and Sir Ferd. Gorges met in council at Plymouth to consider the danger of a combined French and Spanish invasion, and the position of the French force near Rochelle, and the wretched condition of the naval force at Plymouth.

Button's cry for more ships brought him however no good-will at the Navy Board, which grudged him the "Antelope" and the "Ivan," and made their objections more or less personal to himself. Writing to Nicholas from Plymouth, 12th February, he says "All the world will take notice if I be unhorsed of the ship in which I have so long served. If dismissed, I shall shelter myself under the lee of a poor fortune, which I thank God will give me bread,

“and lay down my sword, and say as the old Roman did, ‘*Votis non armis vincitur.*’ I had heard strange reports of Sir James Bagg, before I knew his ways, “but I have been a witness to his integrity and zeal.” True to his nepotic notions, and confident as any Napier, and with equal reason, in the merit of his blood,” he ends by recommending “his nephews “Captains Edward and William Button, and his cousin, “Captain Martin Button.” The Admiral though at war with the Admiralty, as has been the custom with Admirals even in our own day, had his friends and in powerful quarters, for, 13th February, the Earl of Denbigh, who held a high naval command, writing to Buckingham, his brother-in-law, says, “he should be “sorry if so able and honest a man as Sir Thomas “Button were neglected.”

A few days later, 15th February, 1628, Sir Thomas and the Navy Board are again at issue, and they complain that contrary to the Duke’s orders he has repaired the “Ivan,” merely to employ his kinsman; and that he will take no “notice of any order unless “he may receive the Duke’s immediate command,” a charge likely enough to have been true. The Board however seems to have recalled the “Antelope” as she, with Captain Anthony Rice, was off the Isle of Wight. 27th May Sir Thomas was on the Irish Seas, where in future we hear much of the “Lion”

and the 12 Whelps, a family of ships which seem to have done the state good service, and with which, according to Captain William Jewell in 1628, "the country is well pleased." In August this year four of the Whelps, one commanded by Capt. William Button, chased five French and Dunkirk ships and took three, of which the richest foundered.

The State Papers for this year contain a list of the vessels having letters of Marque for taking pirates for 1625-28, whence it appears that of these there were in 1626, 83 ships, in 1627, 454, and in the first eight months of 1628, 214, of which the "St. Anne" and the "George" belonged to Sir Thomas Button and the other adventurers trading to Guinea, as did the "Bonaventure" licensed with letters of Marque later in the same year. 5th November Capt. Jewell brought the 5th Whelp into Plymouth. He had been employed in the attack on Rochelle, of which, and its failure, Jewell sent in an account to the Admiralty.

28th November Sir Thomas was at Milford Haven, writing to Nicholas to explain why he cannot take the advice of Sir Robert Mansel and go to London before Christmas to expedite certain business about the Irish employment. 17th March, 1629, he certified to the merits of Captain John Winter, no doubt one of the Winters of Lydney, a distinguished naval family. 1st May, the "Lion" victualling in the Downs, was

under orders to join Button in the Irish Seas. 1st June the 9th Whelp, also under orders for Ireland, and which had been delayed for provisions, seamen, and a debt of £600 to the Mayor of Porsmouth, was reported as on the station, by Thomas Morgan, her captain. From a report in June it appears that notwithstanding the peace with France, their ships were more active than ever, and a French man-of-war actually lay off Bristol, between the Holmes and Bridgewater, and pretending ignorance of the peace, captured a trow.

In August Button and his Whelps were on the Irish Seas, and while commanding the "Convertive" he fell in with four Dunkirkers chasing a Welsh collier, and captured one of them, the "St. Jehan," laden with salt and cognac, an event which proved a source of trouble to him for some years. 19th September the Third Whelp is to victual at Portsmouth, on her way to join Sir Thomas, who on the 20th was at Milford, where he asks permission of the Admiralty to be allowed to keep the "St. Jean" prize until he can himself take her to Bristol. Meantime he is conveying £600 from the Earl of Cork to Ireland, and the 9th Whelp is conveying the Earl himself from Chester. The 5th Whelp is acting as convoy of a French and two English ships to the Land's End. The French and Dunkirk pirates are numerous. He sent up the

papers of the prize to Nicholas, who will not find him "unthankful." It appears that his real wish is to be allowed to retain the prize as a set-off against his claims for government arrears. He proposes to purchase the King's share, and to spend the amount in the supply of his ships. 25th September he is still at Milford driven back by contrary winds, and has just received orders for his employment on the West coast of England, which is not compatible with his other orders. He asks Secretary Dorchester to be allowed £1,400 out of the value of the prize, to pay off a mortgage on his land, incurred for expenses in the service, and he wished Captain Edmund Button, the prize captain, to command any reinforcement sent him. In another letter of the same date he makes another request to Nicholas about the prize, asks for the whole, or if this be denied, the half, with leave to purchase the other half. He proposes that the prize be fitted up as one of his ships and placed under Edmund Button. He himself wishes to be less aboard, having been absent from his home two years. On 10th October the prize was received at Bristol. She had been attacked on the part of her Calais owners, and should they prove her taken illegally Sir Thomas will be a great loser. Meantime, the Devonshire people are anxiously expecting Sir Thomas on their coasts, then infested by both French

and, since the peace, English pirates. The proceedings at Bristol are thus related by Edmund Button :

To the Wor<sup>th</sup> Edwarde Nicholas esquire secrytarye to the Lords Commissioners and one of the Clerkes of his Ma<sup>ties</sup> Counsell, these att his house in King streat deliver this.

NOBELL Sr.

I have written seaverall letters unto you since my cominge heere with the prise, but have not received no answer of any of them w<sup>ch</sup> makes me duptfull whether you have received them or noe. The French men hath procurde a comission out of the Admiraltie to Mr. Willet, Mr. Langton, Mr. Shriffe Colson, and Mr. Derick Popley for to sequester the shipp and goods into their hands. Mr. Poplye came aboard with sixe of the French men and would have me to deliver the possession of the shipp and goods into their hands, upon that I tould him for the goods that they might sequeasher with all my harte but for the ship I would keep possession of, as yf untill such time that I had order, for my men w<sup>ch</sup> is 20 in number that is belonging to the Conuertive, and that I knew not no better place for to keepe them togeather then the ship for theye beane in her ever since shee had bene taken, and I hope they wilbe the fitter men to staye in her than anye stranger they can put aboard, for the charge lieth upon me and I have a desire to have a discharge for my selfe afore I doe dispose my selfe of the shipp. The rest of these busnes I leave to Mr. Willet letters to you, good sire lett mee heere from you as sonne as you can, and thuse with the remembrance of my loue I rest and ever will remaine,

Yo<sup>r</sup> true, thankefull servante,

EDM. BUTTON.

Bristoll the 30 of October, 1629.

[State Papers, Domestic, Ch. I. vol. 150, No. 105.]



In November Sir Thomas was at Kinsale with the "Convertive," having been six days between the Land's End and Ireland, in stormy weather, with much danger and great damage to the ship. He touched at Cork and sent the "5th Whelp" to scour the western ports. He complains of everything. No victuals can be obtained on credit, from the bad reputation of the government as paymasters. His gunner, boatswain, and carpenter make loud complaints of the quantity and quality of the stores, which are worse than they used to be. He thanks both Dorchester and Nicholas for their favour and pains about the Dunkirk ship, sends remembrances to various persons, "love and service to noble Sir Benjamin Rudyerd," and begs Nicholas "to be his buckler towards the Lords of the Admiralty for not doing more than the elements will give leave." A week later he sent off Captain Rice with the "9th Whelp" to account to the Admiralty for his enforced stay at Kinsale, and wrote by him as follows:

For his Ma<sup>ty</sup>s especiall service.

To the Right Honorable the Lords and others his Ma<sup>ty</sup>s  
Commissioners for the Governmentt of the Admiraltye  
att Courte haste these.

W<sup>th</sup> all haste possible from aboard the Converte  
in Kinsale Harboure this 19th of November,  
1629.

THO. BUTTON.

RIGHT HONORABLE,

May it please yo<sup>r</sup> lo<sup>p</sup> to understand that ever sithence my coming into this kingdome the extremitie of southerlye and easterlye stormes have bin soe violentt and greate that till this daye, noe shipp nor barke bound for Bristoll or anye other porte of England were able to gett hence, and nowe with the first winde I sende away Captaine Rice with the 9th whealpe to lett yo<sup>r</sup> lo<sup>p</sup> knowe the cause of my stay in these partes soe longe, and w<sup>th</sup>all whye w<sup>th</sup> my owne shipp and the other whealpe, order cominge but last night from the Lords Justices and my owne tyme of vitlinge beinge determined since the 17th of this month. I am inforst to staye till vitles be made readye to bringe us from hence.

My most Honorable good lords I must humblye begg that I may not suffer in his Ma<sup>ty</sup>s nor yo<sup>r</sup> lo<sup>s</sup> good opinions for not doinge what was requirde by your first commands, to hasten for the lands end, Plymothe and those partes, nor my longer stay here in these partes (extremitie of stormes beyond example being the course of both), then what I justlye deserve, for uppon my life I have not nor will not loose on hower of what I may gaine by the leave of weather with all trew zeale, to performe his Ma<sup>ty</sup>s service and your Lo<sup>s</sup> commande: And doe therefore most humbly begg a just construction therein, and that y<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>p</sup>s wilbe pleased to send som order to his Ma<sup>ty</sup>s customes or some other of the porte of Bristoll that wee may be supplied, when wee com thither, and what other order yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>p</sup> will please to give for the further imployment of these shippes, the coasts att this tyme havinge severall piratts uppon it (thoe in remote parts) whoe will appeare to doe mischeefe as soone as they here the shippes are gone off the coast. Soe humbly leavinge the consideration heereof to yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>p</sup>s grave consideration and my selfe to the continuance of yo<sup>r</sup> honorable and wonted good opinion, I rest as most bounde faithfullye

readye to doe yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>ps</sup> service whilst I am

THO. BUTTON.

From aboard the Convertive in the Horbor of Kinsayle this  
19th of November, 1629.

[Ch. I, vol. 152, No. 19].

Captain Rice reached Bristol on the 25th, having brought over Lord Falkland. Reporting himself to the Admiralty he asks for victuals, ten more men, and four more pieces of ordnance.

Sir Thomas himself followed, and orders came down dated on the 21st December to pay off the "Convertive" and the 5th and 9th Whelp. On the 23rd, Sir Thomas thus writes:

To the Right Honorable & my most honorid good  
Lo. the Lord Vicounte Dorchester principall Secre-  
tarye of State to his Ma<sup>ty</sup> & on of the most honorable  
Commissioners for the Admiraltie, at Courte must  
give theise.

MY MOST HONORABLE GOOD LORD,

The letter from your Lo. and the rest of the Lo<sup>es</sup> Commissioners of the Admiraltie of the 8th of October for the sending the Dunkirke prize for Bristoll as likewise yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>s</sup> letter of the 9th of this presentt cam not to my hand till yesterdaye, and as I performed the first letter thoe I receivde it not sooner, so will I do the like for the carefull layinge upp of the Convertive and 5th whealpe till farther directions, as likewise to affurther the dispatche of the 9th whealpe for Irland, and wishe w<sup>th</sup> all my harte it had stood

w<sup>th</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> likinge that the 5th whealpe had bin sentt thither likewise for at this time ther ar 2 piratts on the coaste, w<sup>ch</sup> by reason of o<sup>r</sup> shortnes of vittles wee could not pursue, and in as muche as bothe St. George his Channell, Seaverne and the west partes may be infested, it had bin happie that bothe might have bin imployde. And for the Convertive it is fitted shee should lye still till towards springe and then I believe ther wilbe cause to send hir abroad for that I feare the sea wilbe full of piratts. My Lord the stronge bond you have layde upon me by yo<sup>r</sup> former favoures, assures me that in all just occasions y<sup>t</sup> may conserne me I shall fynd the continewance of it, and howsoever that ther is this longe stopp of indication for that shipp; yet if yo<sup>r</sup> Lo. cloake be yo<sup>r</sup> owne or my howse I dwell in myne (as sure) is shee a lawfull prize: if her beinge a Dunkerker maye make her soe; but if my yll happ be the cause it can have noe better effectt; I must sitt down w<sup>th</sup> pacience and saye I am sorie for it and pray to God to send me some better chaunce, for I am sure if his Ma<sup>te</sup> be not the more graciouse to me by releavinge me som other waye what w<sup>th</sup> my great arrears & by this kind of startinge employments I shalbe an undon man quicklye. Wherefore for the presentt prevencion, whereof I am most humblye to beseeche your Lo. and my Lord Stewarde that yo<sup>w</sup> will please to send for Mr. Francis Morice the Clarke of the Ordinance and Mr. Reynoldes the master gunner of England, unto whom I have 400*li.* land a year and better forfeited for not paymentt of 1200*li.* that they will not take the extremitie of the forfeiture and give me longer time of paymentt, and in the interim if this shipp be not adjudgde prize that his Ma<sup>te</sup> out of his generouse goodness will give me the makinge of a baronitt to paye the consideration of my deapts w<sup>ch</sup> my estate will not inhable me to doe, thus muche I humbly presentt w<sup>th</sup> muche bowldness to yo<sup>r</sup> Lo. favour and begg yo<sup>r</sup> honorable healpe to preventt my

utter undoinge; if it may any waeye in yo<sup>r</sup> Honorable judgmentt seem fitt unto you.

I am at this instantt and have bin by reason of thes great stormes very yll in my head and trobl'd w<sup>th</sup> som deafnes in so muche as that I shall not be able to wayte on yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>p</sup> nor to attend my perticuller occasions so soone as otherwise I wold, w<sup>ch</sup> I shall most humblye begg pardone and beseeche yo<sup>r</sup> Lo. protection, that I maye not therfore be subiectt to any censure, for w<sup>ch</sup> as for all the rest of yo<sup>r</sup> most honorable favoures I shall ever be

Yo<sup>r</sup> Lor. most humble and ever indeaptid servant,

THO. BUTTON.

Bristoll this 23 of December, 1629.

[Ch. I, vol. 153, No. 82.]

The next preserved letter is from Bristol, 24 December.

To my most woorthye and trewe faithfull friend Edward Nichollas Esquier Secretarye to the Lords Commissioners for the Admiraltie and on of the Clarkes of his Ma<sup>ties</sup> most Honorable Privie Counsell give theise.

MY TREWLYE RESPECTED MR. NICHOLAS,

Their Lor<sup>s</sup> of the 6th of October and yo<sup>rs</sup> of the 3rd and 8th of the same I received this daye, cominge last night to this place, yo<sup>r</sup> love in all doth muche appeare for w<sup>ch</sup> I shall never be wantinge to express my most thankfull acknowledgments, and howsoever I writt their Lo<sup>s</sup> my intencion to carye the prize w<sup>th</sup> me yot before this order or any knowledge thereof cam to my hands, I sentt the prize to Bristoll w<sup>th</sup> suche of the compaue of that prize as alsoe those certificatts under the hande and seale of the Archduches, as alsoe under the seale of Donkerke to prove him prize, besides his not havinge of anye Cocquett or bills of landinge to showe (but

by the skippers own confession acknowledge they were thrown overboard by himsealfe) and that all this could not in all this tyme begett a judication to make her prize is strandge to me and therfor not beinge hable in respectt of myn indisposition of bodye to looke after that busnes my sealfe as yet, I must beseache yo<sup>w</sup> w<sup>th</sup> their Lo<sup>s</sup> favour in justice that it may receive som positive resolution and if not as prize then I say under favour that I may as welbe chalendgd for my howse I dwell in or my cloake I weare and saye it is not myn owne, as that it can be denied that this is good prize: and that is all I can saye in that busnes and for the success I must leave it holye to God.

For the breakinge of bulke w<sup>ch</sup> was don by the knowledge and approbation of the skipper, and by w<sup>ch</sup> ther was neither dishonestie nor losse intendid to whom so ever shee shoulde be judgde, I have formerly writt my reasons of it and if I have offendid in it, I must humblye submitt my sealfe to their Lo<sup>s</sup> in yt and supplycatt their charitable construction therein assuring their Lo<sup>s</sup> uppon my liffe neither his Ma<sup>ty</sup> nor the propriator hathe or shall suffer by it.

For the disposinge of thes shipps as I understand by Mr. Willett it is nowe intendid, I can be but from my harte sorrye for it, for beleave it Mr. Nicholas thoe I could propose awaye howe his Ma<sup>ty</sup> chargde shoulde not be the same in wynter as in sommer, yet to recover what we have lost in honore and the subiectt in estate, and wantt of protection, this is not the waye to doe it, but som must alwayes be contynewde as well in wynter as in sommer, and towards that chardge the Lords Justicis of Irland are resolvd to drawe the 2 whealpes into the list of that kingdom's charge and for this shipp for the next yeare, or some other of good force, which I shall make good choice of that must be of countenance for the somer season and of competent force to doe service w<sup>th</sup>, if it wilbe referred to me to make choice of the shipp

and take care of the service I will undertake for the Antylippe or this shipp and on of the pinks w<sup>th</sup> 20 men to contractte the chardge w<sup>th</sup>in the chardge of on shipp for the hole year w<sup>th</sup> 120 men and to mayntayn the guard of that coaste w<sup>th</sup> honor and som profit to his Ma<sup>ty</sup> securitye to the subiectt tradinge, and verye muche to the increase of his Ma<sup>ty</sup> customs and comen good of bothe kingdoms, thus muche I shal beseeche yo<sup>w</sup> to intymatt to their Lo<sup>s</sup> and in what consernes me to doe as you wear wont and I shall ever be yo<sup>r</sup> servauntt: if they send the 9th whealpe or what other soever for that coast, I hope it wilbe w<sup>th</sup> relation to me and my instructions whoe have that comand apsolute duringe my liffe, and if in their lo<sup>s</sup> wisdomes they howld it fitt not to imploye any greater force for those partes, the towe whealpes they in Irland will take into their chardge to provide for them, and I hope I shall have the comand of them as it is dewe unto me, all w<sup>ch</sup> I reffer to yo<sup>r</sup> lovinge and judicious consideration and praye yo<sup>w</sup> to acquainte my Lord Steward, my Lord Dorchester and Mr. Secretarye Cooke w<sup>th</sup> what I write unto yo<sup>w</sup>.

So sendinge this berer purposelye to give accountt of what shalbe requird from hym touchinge those moneys that have bin disburst out of the 6000*li*. recev<sup>d</sup> from the Lord of Corke as also to bringe me perticuler answre of all bussnessis from yo<sup>r</sup> seaffe I rest nowe as I shall doe ever

Yo<sup>r</sup> most affectionate & trew thankfull friend

THO. BUTTON.

Ther is to be deliverd to their Lo<sup>s</sup> by my pursur on Capten William Scranes of Hampton who beinge sentt for by som warantt from the judge of the Admiraltie of Munster renderd hym seaffe into my protection and nowe comes to answer in the Admiraltie heare what so ever may be obiectid against hym and the rather because hee hathe put in caution

of 2000*li*. in the Admiraltie heare which [bin]des hym to acquitt hym seaffe of what can be any waye justly layed to his chardge. Whearin I howld him to be so cleare as I shall beseeche yo<sup>r</sup> best favour towards hym for that I knowe hee will honestly and thankfully deserve it.

Bristoll this 24th 10<sup>bre</sup> 1629.

That I cam no sooner from Irland uppon my salvation had it bin for the savinge of the kingdom I beinge to doe what I was requirde I could not have preventid it as this berer can give yo<sup>w</sup> more perticuller satisfaction.

This daye since the writinge this lett. their Lo<sup>s</sup> letter and yo<sup>rn</sup> of the 9th of this presentt cam not to my hands wherein I will performe what is commandid for the Convertive and 5th whealpe but for the 9th whealpe ther can be no thinge don till money be sentt down for her dispatche and talkinge w<sup>th</sup> Mr. Willett and Mr. Kitchinge to know wheather they had any they saye no so that therin I can doe no thinge till they please to send money, my hope is in yo<sup>w</sup> for all that consearnes me.

[Ch. I, vol. 153, No. 85.]

1630 found the prize question still undecided. The admiral, sorely tried, presses for a decision one way or the other, and sends "his love to Jack Pennington." He now visited his house at Cardiff; and as a reason for not going to London, 20th Jan., says, "My only daughter has bad small pox, and the rest of my children are ill at home, and they are many."

Probably in the midst of these troubles, it was grateful to the old sailor to be consulted about his arctic knowledge. His answer to a communication on that



subject from the Admiralty was as follows :

For his Mat<sup>s</sup> especial service.

To the Right Honorable and very much honored good  
lord the lord Vicount Dorchester principall Secre-  
tarye of State to his Ma<sup>tie</sup> att Courte or ells where  
haste these.

THO. BUTTON.

RIGHT HONORABLE AND MY MUCH HONORED GOOD LORD,

Yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>s</sup> letter of the 14th of Januarye concerninge the  
North-west passadge w<sup>th</sup> the coppie of Luke Fox his petition  
and others in that busines cominge by the way of Bristoll came  
to my hande but the 14th of this present att 6 of the clock  
att night, whereby finding his Mat<sup>s</sup> pleasure and the contents  
of their petition the next day the better to inhale my selfe  
to give satisfaction in a pointe of so highe a nature I over-  
looked my jorname and those notes and papers that longe have  
laine by me, w<sup>ch</sup> I thought would never have bin made use  
of, consideringe that these later tymes amonge o<sup>r</sup> nation rather  
studies howe to forgett al thinges that may conduce to the  
good of posteritye by adventuringe six pence if they find not  
a greate and presentt benefitt to inew thereof.

But in as much as yet att length it pleaseth God to open  
the eies of som to looke after soe important a busines for the  
honor of his Ma<sup>ty</sup> and not only the comon good of this o<sup>r</sup>  
kingdome, but of all o<sup>r</sup> neighbore nations. I shall in answer  
of yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>s</sup> letter and in most humble obedience to my most  
royall masters command, deliver not only my opinion (but  
under correction my knowledge gotten by the sharpest ex-  
perience) of that designe of any man of my coate, livinge not  
only in o<sup>r</sup> owne kingdome, but in any other in these neigh-  
bouringe partes.

What yo<sup>r</sup> Lo. writes off that his Ma<sup>ty</sup> requires to be informed  
of by me is.

First whether there be any likelyhood or probabilitye to compass the designe yes or noe.

To that I answer; that my opinion is nowe as it ever hath bin sithence my retorne thence and as I then delivered it with the perticuler reasons of it to my most royall master of most famouse memorie that then was king James, that beinge undertaken in a fittinge waye and a dewe season I made and doe make as full accompt of the feasiblenes of it, as I doe of any knowne chanell that is best knowne to us in these norther partes, and to be performed with as little danger (and was so approved by his Ma<sup>tie</sup> to be) whoe inforst as manye and as important questions for his owne satisfactions, as if all the best experienced mariners of the Christian world had convented them selves togeather to have drawne the interrogatories. The same reasons have I delivered to manye most honorable and knowinge persons and to our best mathematicians as Mr. Briggs Mr. Wells and others with all the best masters and mariners of our kingdome, as alsoe to others both Hollanders and French and in my discourse w<sup>th</sup> any on of them all, they never went unsatisfied from me of the probabilitie of it and for farther accompt herein att presentt I can give non, but if my journall or any other my notes or papers (w<sup>th</sup> ought else in me) may give his Ma<sup>tie</sup> any farther or fuller satisfactions: when I waight on his Highnes (w<sup>ch</sup> I hope wilbe much sooner then is fitt for them to advaunce (for to sett out to tymelye, is to faule to soone into that danger that to late a repentance cannot healpe them out on) I will doe my best out of my ould experiance to affurther the good of it; and prevent the evells and inconveniences that pretending men, of little experience, or non at all may suddenly bringe uppon it; for I will bowldlye saye that whoe shalbe fitt to have the manedginge of this unparaleld busines ought first to be soe religieuse as to hould his end the happiest that dyes for the glorye of God the honor of his kinge and the publike good of his cuntrye

all w<sup>ch</sup> in this designe have their severall and particuler interest, and therefore he must not looke backe for feare of the dainger of either unknowne coastes, hideouse stormes, darke and long continewed mistes, to lye amonge and all wayes to see more landes and ilands of ice, then he can see of sea, and oft tymes rocks under him in sight, when he shall within thrice his ships length fynde twentye fathom water; and to incounter this under favor must he be well armed that shall undergoe this busines: for thrice sithence my being there hath it bin attemptid and for owght I here little (or rather I may bouldlye saye noe) advancem<sup>t</sup> given to the busines: therefore there cannot be to much curiositie used to put it into a good and choise hand w<sup>ch</sup> I will hartilye praye may be most happilye lighted on for wee live not in the adge to fynde that they are the most perfitt which makes the glorioste shewe.

The seconde pointe required is whether it may prove of such benefitt and advantadge as is pretended.

To that I most humblye answer that, that received opinion of former ages (as well as of these moderne times) both in many other cuntryes abroade, as in o<sup>r</sup> owne kingdom and amongst o<sup>r</sup> owne marchants att home mainetaines and makes good that pointe, therefore to that I can say noe more, but that I will as hartilye praye that God may give a blessinge to the discoverye; w<sup>ch</sup> in the first place must be the imediate introduction to bringe on, and perfitt the rest of w<sup>ch</sup> honor to be that most happie man weare my yeares sutable to such an undertaking; or my purse answerable to what in hart I would be most willinge to adven<sup>t</sup>er, I would be loathe any man livinge should undertake it sooner then my selfe, or adventure more towards it then I would: but beinge no otherwise vsefull in myne owne power or abilitie, then in my wel-wishinge, and what other affurthrance may lie in me: yet what I formerlye suffred by my wynteringe doth sufficientlye satisfie all reasonable and experienst men, that to ron<sup>n</sup> the

hazard or chardge of such a purpose can be no other end then the ineuitable hazard of all, and therefore either the passages will be found or not to be hoped for, the first yeare, soe by that assurance the first chardge wiibe much the less, and the course certaine, w<sup>ch</sup> will effect it the sooner, for nowe there wilbe noe faulinge into Hudsons Baye nor Buttons Baye to mispend tyme as both he and I did to noe purpose and that only by Instructions out of England, but as soone as he comes to the west parte or Cape of Notinghams Iland where he is to anchor, and according to the sett of that tyde, w<sup>ch</sup> he shall fynd there to direct his course, w<sup>ch</sup> must be and the only way to fynde that passadge, w<sup>ch</sup> I doe as confidently beleave to be a passadge as I doe there is on either betweene Calis and Dover or betweene holy Head and Ireland. This beinge all att present that I can doe in answer of yo<sup>r</sup> lo<sup>s</sup> letter or for his Mat<sup>s</sup> informacon in this busines, intendinge to bringe upp my jornall, and such other notes as I haue least when I come vpp my sealfe for his Mat<sup>s</sup> or yo<sup>r</sup> lo<sup>s</sup> further satisfaction (but to noe other hand) I most humblye take my leaue assuring yo<sup>r</sup> lo<sup>s</sup> on my faith yo<sup>r</sup> letter came noe sooner, then when I write and if there be any error happens by it, the faulte is not myne, whoe am and allwayes shalbe

Yo<sup>r</sup> lo<sup>s</sup> most respectiue trew  
thankefull and humble servant

THO. BUTTON.

From my howse att Cardiffe this 16th day of Februarye  
1629.<sup>1</sup>

[Ch. I, vol. 161, No. 10.]

The next and concluding letter was also written from Cardiff on the same day. It appears from the

<sup>1</sup> New style, 1630.

endorsement, to have followed the Court to Newmarket,  
and to have been received there.

*Indorsed.*—S<sup>r</sup> Tho. Button y<sup>e</sup> 26th of Feb<sup>r</sup> rec'd at  
Newmarket y<sup>e</sup> 27, 1629.

*Directed.*—To the most honorable the Lord Vicount  
Dorchester I most humblye presentt this.

MOST HONORABLE GOOD LORD.

I have in another letter given yo<sup>r</sup> lo. a full accounte  
of what yo<sup>r</sup> requir touchinge the Northe West passadge  
but by this I felt it fitt to acquainte yo<sup>r</sup> Lo. that ther is a  
former patentt as full of all powre and immunities graunted  
by Kinge James (when I went the jorney first) as the best  
Councell of England could devise and what is done to nichillat  
[annihilate or annul] that I knowe not, but before his Ma<sup>te</sup> be  
ingagd to graunt this newe (vnder correction) I thinke it wold  
not be a miss to talke w<sup>th</sup> Dr. John Wolstenholme or S<sup>r</sup> Dudley  
Diggs whose then wear chiefe under prince Henry for the  
manadginge of that bus<sup>ness</sup> and whom I beleave will give yo<sup>r</sup> lo.  
the best light of what in Hon<sup>r</sup> & Justice his Ma<sup>te</sup> may graunte  
to thes petieoners w<sup>th</sup>out preiudice to the first graunte, w<sup>ch</sup> I  
presume yo<sup>r</sup> lo. will fynde to be very stronge besides the  
qualitie of the peticonars to be lookte vpon, whose if they  
be noe other then as folx [folks] is stilde mear mariners, it  
cannot promise muche of their extraordinarie performancis, as  
hath bin made appeare formerlye in this perticuler designe,  
wittnes Weymothe with many other whose names I cannot  
remember who wold never to farr advaunce in the face of  
danger either to gaine Honor them seelves (a thing not  
naturall nor proper to their dispositions nor understandings)  
nor profitt to posteritye, if gaine and presentt benefit be not  
the spurr to their resolutions: and thus muche in service to  
his Ma<sup>te</sup> and in my bounden respectt to yo<sup>r</sup> lo. vnto whose

hande his Ma<sup>te</sup> hath comittid the care of it, I helt it my dewtie to acquainte your lo. w<sup>th</sup> most humblye leavinge it to yo<sup>r</sup> lo. mor grave consideration.

Most honord good Lord voschafe me the honor and favour not as yo<sup>w</sup> ar in place but as yo<sup>w</sup> ar my most honorable and trewe approvid good friend, to give me leave vnder the protection of yo<sup>r</sup> goodnes, to deploare the condition of my presentt miserable estate and condition to yo<sup>r</sup> lo. yt is not unknowne vnto yo<sup>w</sup> howe longe I have livde a servante to his Ma<sup>te</sup> and prediccors in publike place, and have never baulkt nor avoidid any employmentt wear it never so remote or dangerouse, so it pretendid to his Ma<sup>te</sup> service or the comonwealthes (as maye well appeare by this employmentt to the North West, the West Indies and all other jorneyes and voiadges for this 37 yeares past) in all w<sup>ch</sup> I hope yo<sup>r</sup> lo. hathe partlye knowen, and I hope ever hard that I have caried my sealfe like an honest man: it hathe bin the happines of manye of my companions and fellowes in employment in thes tymes, and of many that have sarved muche less tyme to be advaunte both in place & fortune. My poor sealfe (most vnhappie and that I hope as a punishmentt for my sinns but never for my vnworthines or dishonestie), am keapte backe not in so good case as I was ten years agoe, for then I owght noe thinge and receivde my paye, but nowe for five yeares past receavinge neither pencion nor paye (but for this last five monthes paste that I was on the coaste of Irland) and yet contynewed in perpetuall attendance and employmentt, so muche to my chardge that I vowe to God for those moneyes that I have bin driven to bow to attend thes servicis I have morgagde and forfeited neare 500*li*. landes per ann. and havinge peticoned his Ma<sup>te</sup> whose graciouse reference by the favourable expression of your most noble pen, to the Lord highe thresor and Lord Stewarde did implye some care to be had for my satisfaction: yet not w<sup>th</sup>standinge many honorable

promis is I have not receivde on farthinge, or by Baronett nor otherwise w<sup>ch</sup> I most humbly desird to be grauntid me to paye the consideration, but neither ton nor tother could I ever it get; w<sup>ch</sup> is the case at this tyme I am not only unable to attend his Mat<sup>s</sup> pleasure for my farther ymployment, but in my home debard of my wontid freedom, by reason I have not means to paye what I owe (then w<sup>ch</sup> affliction of this later not to be hable to paye every on his owne) this world cannot laye a greater on me: besides (as mostly by yo<sup>r</sup> trewe honorable favoure in mediatinge for me, his Mat<sup>s</sup> was so graciously inclyned to my good, by easinge me in parte of my greate areare, as to be pleasde to graunt me the moyetie of the Donkerke shippe I tooke, but in that there hathe bin suche a stopp made of indication, that I cannot thinke that ther should be any reason for it, but my yll fate that should cause it, for if ever shipp or goods belonged to Donkerke that shipp and goodes did, and that it is most apparant, had it bin otherwise in this 7 monthes that shee hathe bin taken theye wold have producte som what for the satisfaction of the Admiraltie and their own clearinge w<sup>ch</sup> as yet they could never doe, therfor nowe my most honorid good Lord havinge in a most vnmanerlye way thus cloyde yo<sup>r</sup> noble eares w<sup>th</sup> an wofull character of my presentt condition, so must I (beinge many wayes warantid thereto by yo<sup>r</sup> many former honorable favoures) most humblye supplicatt yo<sup>r</sup> best favoure not to advaunce nor to affurther my prefermentt in place nor fortune (for I vowe to God I desire neither, but to give yo<sup>r</sup> still stretchid out arme to all good men and all good purpose) in assistance, to preventt my rewine who have livde as longe and given as good testimonye of my beinge a faithfull and honest servauntt to this State as most men nowe leavinge of my rancke in this kingdom, whearfor, most honorable lord vouchsafe the least might of yo<sup>r</sup> favore and justice, by vsinge som part of yo<sup>r</sup> powre w<sup>th</sup>

his Ma<sup>e</sup> to caste som smale glimse of his graciouse favour towards me as for 37 yeares of tyme spentt in his Ma<sup>s</sup> his royall father (of famouse memory deceast) and predecessores service, I maye not nowe at the last of my dayes, be rewardid w<sup>th</sup> rewin and undoinge to me my wiffe and 7 children w<sup>ch</sup> I doe protest I cannot w<sup>th</sup>stand if I be not the sooner releivde, an that at least by som waye to paye my consideration money and stoppage my creditores, if not to satisfie me of my hole dewe: for the waye of o<sup>r</sup> presentt employments, to be 2 partes of the yeare abroade and the third at home to attend and spend without gettinge any thinge to support us, but by borowinge what at last must faule vppon o<sup>r</sup> estates is the waye to rewine us all and not to give the least incoradgmentt to attend or affectt his Ma<sup>s</sup> service. The consideration whearof, togethir w<sup>th</sup> my most humble suite. to yo<sup>r</sup> Lo. to make a charitable construction of this my boldnes, havinge made choise rather to laye my sealfe at yo<sup>r</sup> lo. feat for so greate a favour then to trust to any other waye or hope by the largde promisis of suche as I fynd producis no other effectts than smoke. I most humbly kiss yo<sup>r</sup> lo's hand, assuring yo<sup>w</sup> vppon my liffe that what yo<sup>r</sup> lo. shall please to doe for me in this my extreamitye shalbe don to as trewe and and as thankfull a man as ever yo<sup>r</sup> lo. have bin pleasde to doe favour to: whoe in all my wayes and best respectts shall ever approve my sealfe to be

Yo<sup>r</sup> lo. most faithfule in all I am :

or can be to do yo<sup>w</sup> aervice,

THO. BUTTON.

From my House in Cardiffe, this 16th of Februarye, 1629.

[Ch. I, vol. 161, No. 11.]

In July, Sidrach Gibbon took a Biscayner, and the admiral left Waterford with the fleet to free



Holyhead and the Chester river from a pirate.

At last the prize was adjudged to the king, and the prize agent pressed Nicholas for orders to sell her, and Sir Thomas had to account for the salt he took from her cargo. Sir Thomas, who was at Cardiff, had been from the end of September to the 24th of October sailing from Dublin to Penarth, and reported his tackle much injured. He asked to have his ship trimmed and graved, and was much grieved to hear that the prize had been bestowed elsewhere.

She was sold for £1,000, and Sir Thomas accounted for thirty lasts of salt taken out of her and sold for £89. Her cargo was ninety lasts of salt and twenty-four hogsheads of aquavitæ. How all was settled does not appear. There were other claims; and mention is made of £3,615:14:4, part of a sum due from the Government to Sir Thomas. While the accounts were under discussion Sir Thomas again got into strife with the Admiralty. He estimated the crews for his two ships, the 5th and 9th Whelps, at eighty and seventy men, at 8*d.* per day, whereas "my Lords" will allow but sixty at 6*d.*; nor will they grant him, personally, above 5*s.* per day. Further, in February, 1631, while he advises "6 murderers" and a couple of "brass minions or light sakers, with everything necessary for a fight with stronger enemies," the admiralty will allow but two murderers" for each

ship, and direct two of the demi-cannon to be exchanged for light culverins.

1st April, Sir Thomas, while captain of the 9th Whelp, is ordered to take charge, as admiral, of the 5th and 9th, and to repair to the coast of Ireland, St. George's Channel, and the Severn, for the defence of traders, and especially of "such as used to trade to the fairs at Bristol at St. James's and St. Paul's tide." He is to ply between Scilly, Cape Clear, and Milford, with Kinsale for his rendezvous. He put his nephew, Captain Thomas, into the 9th Whelp.

While waiting for a wind, he wrote to ask Lord Dorchester to move the king to allow monies due to himself and his sister Whoick, in the Court of Wards. The sister "Whoick" does not appear in the family pedigree,

5th May, he dropped down the Channel from King Road, "within 5 miles from his own house," but with no time to stop, as he has to see to the Biscayners and Dunkirkers about the mouth of the Severn and the Land's End. While on his course to Milford, the 5th Whelp was detained at Penarth, by a change of wind, for fourteen days.

The year 1631, found Sir Thomas aged, and broken in health and purse, waging a bitter and incessant war with the Lords of the Admiralty and Stephen Alcock, victualler of the navy, and apparently a very

important personage, and a better accountant than the Admiral. Alcock claimed £45 for provisions formerly supplied to Sir Thomas' pursers; and the Admiral, leaving town suddenly for the West, wrote letters to the Admiralty on the 2nd of April, from Westminster and from Maidenhead, requesting that the claim might be satisfied, and praying for his own heavy arrears overdue four years. If this money be not paid, "his wife and seven children must beg." He mentions that he has the custody of a fort in Ireland.

On the 7th he writes again, from Bristol, pressing the payment of the £45, without which Alcock will not victual the ninth Whelp, and dwelling upon his fears from his private creditors. This letter the Admiralty referred, on the 18th, to Alcock.

On the 24th Sir Robert repeats his attack, commencing with Alcock. He then points out that the Severn and Irish Channel are full of pirates, and insists upon full crews. He seems himself to have victualled the hungry Whelp, and puts in the account of his purser, Thomas Morgan. It appears, however, by a letter of the 26th, that Alcock is concerned in victualling both the fifth and ninth Whelps. He again demands £358:13:4 arrears due to him.

On the 2nd May he was preparing to sail from Bristol that night, but was in trouble with the victuallers. His post was Admiral of the Irish and

Bristol Channels. He put to sea, but was detained under Penarth, by adverse winds, almost in sight of his own house. At last he got free, and on his way to Dublin chased a Biscayan pirate. This he reported, 16th June, from Holyhead; commencing, as usual, with his victualling grievances.

5th July he told Nicholas, the secretary to the Admiralty, that he wished himself employed in any other way for his better good; and that "his nephew Will" (Capt. William Thomas) "was again with him, whereby the King would be better served, and the state better satisfied." He then, in reference to a letter from Richard Earl of Cork, complaining of Turkish men-of-war on the west coast of Ireland, added "how dishonourable and how unchristian a thing it is that these Turks should dare to do these outrages and unheard-of villanies upon His Majesty's coasts, by reason of the weakness of his guards."

7th December Alcock appeared in the field with a statement that he had overpaid Sir Thomas £17:1:4 for victualling the fifth and ninth Whelps.

The Admiralty, thus goaded into action, 28th January, 1632, summoned Sir Thomas and Stephen Alcock to attend the Board. Sir Thomas then put in, by way of declaration, a breviat of the business between Alcock and himself, which the Board proposed to consider on the 4th February. About this time

the victualling of the ships on the Irish coast, which had so long been in the hands of the Admiral, was committed to those of Thomas Morgan, purser of the ninth Whelp.

The Admiralty referred the dispute to a committee of naval officers, who, having examined into the question between Sir Thomas and the victuallers, reported, 9th March, that the latter owed Sir Thomas £56:18:4; but that the Admiral had to account for casks and biscuit bags to the value of £84:10:4.

The Admiral seems to have carried his point as to his nephew "Will"; for 23rd March, Capt. William Thomas, who was a son of William Thomas of Moulton and Mary Button, was his lieutenant in the 9th Whelp, and was left in charge of her, as will be seen, while his uncle was engaged on shore in pressing his claims upon the government.

26th April, writing from Worlton, his mother's (Margaret Lewis's) house, he says he has been for twenty-four weeks attending the court at Newmarket, without obtaining either a penny of the great sum due to him, or of the £358 ordered him by the Lords for his arrears. Probably these twenty-four weeks were at different times. On his return from the court to London, his progress westwards was delayed by sickness. He then heard that the Lords intended to send a better guard to Ireland, and hoped to be able to discharge

whatever duty might be entrusted to him. He also asked for orders to fit out the Whelps at Bristol, as there were two or three piratical men-of-war off the Irish coast and in the Severn. In another letter from Worlton, of the same date, but of a more private character, he tells Nicholas that his journey home, of two hundred miles, has increased his indisposition, which was further added to by an attempt to do some service on a pirate which lay ten days in the harbour of Milford Haven ; and now, on his return, he is taken seriously ill at his mother's. He sends up the bearer to let the Lords know the cause of his stay. All his desire is to depart the world with the reputation of an honest man, and a disengaged man in his estate. The ambition of the times is far from him. He begs to be commended to Jack Pennington, to whom he is more bound for his love than to any friend he has. He begs to know how he stands with the Lords, and how they intend to dispose of the ships that are to go out.

Sir Thomas struggled manfully to return to his command, and actually got as far, probably, as Milford, for 13th May he writes again from Worlton that he has been forced back eighty miles by sickness, but still hopes to be able to perform their Lordship's orders. To add to his distresses, his nephew, Capt. William Thomas, whom he had left in charge of his ship, lost a

prize reputed to be valuable, but of which the Admiral denies the value. "The accident," he says, "might have happened to any one." Nevertheless, both the loss of the prize by Thomas, and the leaving the ship in command of his nephew by the Admiral, were made the subjects of charges against him.

"Thirteen days later (28th May) Sir Thomas had reached his house at Sandy Haven, but was very weak, and could not stir five miles. He is impatient at the non-arrival of the Whelps. He took occasion of a letter to the Lords to put in a word for Capt. Thomas, who was under arrest, and he authorised Nicholas not to let him want for money. He seems again to have been forced back by illness to his mother's care, and was apparently at Worlton on the 30th. On the 2nd of June he has got the Murderer for his armament; but remains at Worlton, where he was heard of on the 9th and 10th. On the 12th of July he ordered the Ninth Whelp to Milford as soon as possible.

Meantime the charge against Capt. Thomas had been made to include the Admiral, for Sir Thomas' uncle, Sir Robert Mansel, writing to Capt. John Pennington, mentions the prosecution against Sir Thomas, and advises an appeal to the King, who, he thinks, will see him righted. Sir Kenelm Digby now appears as holding the reversion of Sir Thomas' patent, and probably anticipating his retirement, writes, 19th Sept.,

praying for the meanest command, so it be in action.

Capt. Thomas had been committed to the Marshalsea, from whence, 1st December, the Lords consent to his discharge, providing Sir Thomas will go bail for £600 for meeting the charge against him. The bail seems to have been given.

7th Jan., 1633, Sir Thomas was at Sandy Haven, busied with naval details; and on the 21st he wrote thence to Nicholas claiming employment as of right, should any ships be prepared for Ireland. He mentions his uncle, Sir Edward Carne of Nash, a teller of the Exchequer, who had married Sir R. Mansel's sister Ann, and alludes to the fact that last year, on account of his own illness and Capt. Thomas' trouble, the Admiralty employed Capt. Plumleigh, of whom Button was evidently jealous; and with reason, for Plumleigh was even then destined to supersede him. Another of the Carne family, John Carne, was, in 1640, victualler to the Navy.

On the 23rd April Sir Thomas addressed a very touching petition to the King. He entreats His Majesty to save from utter ruin himself, his wife, and his seven children. He prays payment of £358:13:4, due to him for service in the "Antelope" in 1627 and 1628; also that £280 due from him, as received from his sister, Anne Merrick, (widow of Rees Merrick of Cotterel), guardian of Barbara Merrick, the King's ward,



may be allowed towards payment of £311 due for his service on the coast of Ireland from 21st Sept. 1621 to 20th July, 1629. Also that the moneys due on his pensions of 6s. 8d. *per diem*, given him for his journey to the North-West, and 6s. *per diem* out of the revenues of Ireland, given him by Queen Elizabeth for nine or ten years' service done in her time, may be paid for the last half year, and henceforward. Also that for the arrears of his pensions, amounting to £3,706, with £500 for his expense as one of the council of war (being two hundred miles from his own dwelling), he may be allowed to contract for some of His Majesty's lands in fee farm. Also that having served the state thirty-nine years, he may continue his employment of admiral on the coast of Ireland, given him by Queen Elizabeth, and confirmed by King James by letters patent for life.

9th October, Henry Yonge founds a claim to be master-gunner in one of the new ships, on the fact that he served with Sir Thomas in the expedition to Algiers; and about the same time Capt. Dawtry Cooper sought compensation because he was superseded by Sir Thomas, and was blown up in the Seventh Whelp. He also is ready to starve. My Lords, it seems, contemplated building new ships in 1634, as suggested by Sir T. Button and others.

22nd Feb., 1633-4, the Admiralty were to consider

the appointment of admiral to the Irish coast, and Sir Thomas was summoned to attend. This led to a statement of certain charges against him, unfitting him, if true, for the employment. These were ten in number, the chief being that he left his ship in command of Capt. William Thomas, whom he had been forbidden to employ, and who by his misconduct occasioned the loss of a prize ship worth £6,000; that in 1630 he sheltered from justice, aboard his ship, Capt. Scras, accused of piracy and murder; and that he was guilty of various frauds in the victualling of his ships, (which victualling he took upon himself by contract with Sir Allen Apsley), especially in applying to his own use a quantity of salt found aboard a captured Dunkirker. The Lords at once formulated these charges, and 26th Feb. put a copy of them into the hands of Sir Thomas; and early in March Robert Wyan, the King's Proctor, took instructions from the Board to put them into legal form, and prepare his proofs for the Court of Admiralty. For that purpose he was to attend Dr. Rives, the King's Advocate, to receive his advice. It appeared that Sir Thomas had been for some time sequestered from his employment as Admiral of the ships employed upon the coast of Ireland, and was "a suitor to the King to have his charge, and be admitted to his defence."

6th March, Wyan applied to Mr. Secretary Nicholas for information on five points:

"1. The ship's name, and the time when Sir Thomas neglected his charge in the Irish seas.—The Ninth Whelp. In March, 1630.

"2. What Gosnell is.—Gosnell was and is Chief Justice of Munster, and is now Judge of the Vice-Admiralty of Munster.

"3. Whether the Fifth Whelp was commanded by Sir Thomas as captain, and the like with the Ninth Whelp.—Capt. Hook was captain of the Fifth Whelp, under Sir Thomas as Admiral.

"4. The time Sir Thomas was employed in the "Antelope."

"5. Who was Sir Thomas' lieutenant of the "Convertive" in 1629, and what voyage was she employed in?—William Thomas was his lieutenant. She was employed for guard of the Irish coast."

Wyan returned the charges to Nicholas 11th March, and proposed to begin the process before he left town.

29th March, Sir Richard Plumleigh, who seems to have been appointed to Button's command, offers witnesses upon the charges.

Sir Thomas, broken as he was, lost no time in his reply, "answering or explaining away each charge in the most direct manner." To each article he replied *seriatim*. He denied that he ever left his charge to his lieutenant in the manner stated. He defended

Capt. William Thomas against the allegation of having tortured the gunner of the "St. John" of Dunkirk ; and also against another charge, of refusing to give up the Portugal ship to Sir Thomas Harris. He alleged that he took on board Capt. Wm. Scras as a prisoner, to bring him to the High Court of Admiralty ; and asserted that he could not be responsible for the Turks having carried one hundred and twenty persons from Baltimore, and made them slaves at Algiers, inasmuch as he was then, by the Lord Justices' order. at Chester, in convoy of one hundred and twenty sail that came out of Ireland.

This, the effectual clearing of his name and fame, was the last act of the gallant old sailor's public life ; for a few weeks afterwards, in April, he was dead, and his widow proposed to press for the payment of the heavy arrears withheld from her by the Government.

Sir Thomas married, probably early in his career, Mary, a daughter of Sir Walter Rice of Dynevor, and by her had two children.

After the Restoration the family finally petitioned for a license to make a baron,—a way of paying debt adopted in favour of pressing and powerful claimants by both Charles I and his son. The petition [State Papers, Dom: C. 11, p. 438.] proceeds from Miles and Florence Button, and Elizabeth, widow of Colonel

John Poyer, Governor of Pembroke. Miles had been forced to mortgage his estate of £250 per annum to pay the debts incurred in the service of Charles I by his father. He himself served in Pembroke garrison, in Ireland, and elsewhere, and lost £5,500. "His wife, Florence, was left portionless by the putting to death of her father, Sir Nicholas Kemys, of Cefn Mably, on surrender of Chepstow Castle. Elizabeth Poyer's husband, after a brave defence of Pembroke at his own charge, was compelled to surrender it, and afterwards executed." A similar petition for the making a baron was put in at the same time by Francis Mansel.

Whether the family obtained their arrears is doubtful; but probably not, for their only claim upon Charles was loyalty to his father. It is satisfactory to know that the existence of the Admiral's family did not depend upon court favour or royal gratitude. Miles, the Admiral's eldest son, was of Sheepecots, in St. Nicholas, and obtained the estate of Cottrell with the hand of Barbara Meyrick, its heiress. Florence Kemys was his second wife; she died, childless, aged 93, 3rd December, 1711, and is buried at St. Nicholas. In 1645 he was possessed of £400 per annum rental. He was a steady royalist, and, besides other services, was at the battle of St. Fagan's, in 1648, fought on the border of the Cottrell estate, and was for a time a prisoner. Miles left issue, and was succeeded by his

son and grandson. Their remote successor in the estate was also a distinguished sailor, Admiral Sir Charles Tyler, G.C.B., who commanded a ship at Trafalgar; and whose successor, Admiral Sir George Tyler, was eminently distinguished in the same service. The estate is still in the family. Fonmon, an estate bordering upon Worlton, was the home of Capt. St. John mentioned in those pages. In our own day it has given to the navy an eminent sailor in the person of the late Admiral Oliver Jones, who was not only distinguished for service at sea in many parts of the globe, but especially for his gallant conduct on shore with the naval brigade during the Indian mutiny.

Besides Capt. Wm. Button of the "Garland," the Admiral's son, and Captain Edward Button of the "Violet," already mentioned, there was another Capt. William Button, probably an elder brother of the Admiral, who, 20th February 1633, is cited by the Governor of Virginia as able to give a good account of the colony, and to shew a sample of its tobacco. He was, in 1634, agent for the Virginia planters, and addressed the Government in their behalf. 22nd July, 1634, the Privy Council informed the Governor and Council of Virginia that the services of Capt. William Button to that colony were to be rewarded by a gift of land on each side of the Appatamuck. This probably made him unpopular in the colony, for 3rd April, 1635,

Governor Hussey alluded to the preposterous haste of Capt. William Button and Sir John Zouch in leaving the colony, and attributes to faction, rather than to zeal for the King's service, their leaving behind the chief of their business.

About 1639 this Captain Button was dead, and his widow had married Ralph Wyat, who, under her assignment, claimed seven thousand acres of land in Virginia, and prayed, in her right, for a confirmation under the great seal. (St. Pap. Col., 160, 184, 785, 201, 306.) Wyat was no doubt a kinsman of Sir Francis Wyat who was named Governor of Virginia, 8th Jan., 1638-9.

The life and services of Sir Thomas Button passed away almost unnoticed, and his memory has been suffered to be forgotten even in his own town and county. The principal features of his very active life will bear a brief recapitulation. Born a cadet of good, and, by his mother, of very ancient family, in the maritime county of Glamorgan, he served at sea in the last eleven years of the famous reign of Elizabeth; and that so bravely that he won from the hands of that great Queen, so sparing of honours and of treasure, high naval rank and a pension for services in the West Indies, which must have been brilliant to have been so early distinguished.

Under Prince Henry, a discerning judge of merit,

he succeeded, 1610-12, Henry Hudson in the career of Arctic discovery. In command of ships bearing the names, then first made celebrated, of the "Resolution" and the "Discovery," he pierced the Straits called after that great navigator; and discovering and naming Resolution Isles, reached Southampton Island, and the mainland of America in north latitude,  $60^{\circ} 40'$ , within Hudson's Bay, at a point which he named "Hope Checked" or "Deceived." He then, 15th Aug., 1612, discovered the mouth of Nelson's River, so called after his ship's master, where he wintered under circumstances of difficulty, which he conquered with great ability; and made himself remarkable for having employed his men during the Arctic winter in out-of-door sports, and by himself instructing them in navigation. In the spring of 1613 he explored the N.W. course of Hudson's Bay, called "Button's Bay," and the adjacent land of "New Wales," by him then discovered. He thence sailed northwards; discovered the islands which he named after his connexion by marriage, Sir Robert Mansel; first penetrated the passage between Cape Chidley and Labrador; and thence returned to England in the autumn, having by his persistence, seamanship, and power of managing seamen, gained very great distinction. His journal, known to have contained the earliest observations on the variation of the compass, is lost. He discovered a current in north



lat. 60°, which led him to suspect a north-west passage. This was afterwards again examined by Capt. Gibbon, a cousin of Button, and a Glamorganshire man, who took out Baffin as his mate. Knighthood and a confirmation of the patent office of admiral on the Irish coast, and a further pension of six shillings *per diem*, seem to have been the rewards of Button's discoveries.

Like all honest public servants, he was more or less out of favour with Buckingham, for some time High Admiral; but in 1620 his services led to his appointment as Rear-Admiral in the expedition to Algiers, commanded by Sir R. Mansel. His service, on his return, seems to have been incessant and severe, though confined to the west coasts of England and Wales and St. George's Channel; all then much infested by French, Spanish, and Barbary pirates. His complaints of want of ships and men, and of the scant quantity and inferior quality of his naval stores, are almost incessant; and even when successful in taking prizes, bitter controversies arose out of their value and disposition. His correspondence exhibits very remarkably the shortcoming and dishonesty of the Government and of the administration of the navy in the reigns of James and Charles, and the degree in which the charges and responsibility of victualling the ships were thrown upon the captains. It often happened that unless they found the money, the ships could not be

got ready for sea, and the appointments could not be taken up; but the arrears for such advances were allowed to accumulate, and when an officer became too pressing he was threatened with a dispute upon his accounts. Sir Thomas' zeal for the service, his want of caution, and his exceedingly testy temper, laid him open specially to these annoyances. The victuallers and such subordinate officials were all against him; and the Lords of the Admiralty were evidently, even when not disposed to be unfair, not unwilling to silence him. In his correspondence, the mortgaged condition of his estate, the impoverishment of his family, the insufficiencies of the naval force at his command, are his staple topics, and, with his temper, evidently preyed upon his health.

He was regarded not only as a gallant but as a scientific sailor, and was in repute as a mathematician, and it must have gratified him much to have been called upon to report to the principal Secretary of State concerning the prospects of a North-West passage; nevertheless he commences with a growl, alluding to his long laid aside papers; "which I thought would have bin made use of, consideringe that these later tymes amonge our nation rather studies howe to forgett al thinges that may conduce to the good of posteritye, by adventuringe sixpence, if they find not a greate and presentt benefitt to insew thereof." He then goes on,

